ANSWER TO MODERNISM

AUTHOR:

MAULANA ASHRAF ALI THANVI (R.A.)

TRANSLATED BY:

PROF. HASSAN ASKARI

MAKTABA DARUL ULOOM
KARACHI

ANSWER TO MODERNISM

by

MAULANA ASHRAF ALI THANWI

Translated by

MUHAMMAD HASAN ASKARI

AND

KARRAR HUSAIN

MAKTABA DARUL-ULOOM KARACHI - 14

CONTENTS

About the Author

"Why has the Islamic world not been providing men like Imam Ghazali since the fall of Baghdad"? The orientalists of the West are in the habit of wondering, not without a malicious glee, and, it goes without saying, not without being echoed by their Eastern admirers what they have so far failed to notice is that by the early 17th century the centre of Islamic sciences has shifted to South Asia which was at that time also the seat of the Mughal Expire, one of the greatest in world history, and of what is generally known as Indo-Muslim culture. It was this age which produced as great scholar and spiritual masters as Sheikh Ahmad of Sarhind, known as "Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani", and Sheikh Abdul Haq of Delhi, to be followed by Shah Waliullah of Delhi in the 18th century, and by his sons in the early 19th century. As British Imperialism tightened its grip on South Asia, the sacred task of and promoting traditional Islamic sciences, and of renewing them---which in this context can only mean, not fanciful innovation, but a re-statement of the authentic orthodox position---was taken up by the world-famous Dar-ul-Uloom of Deoband, under the

guidance of Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautvi, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan, who were not only great scholars, but also great freedom-fighters and spiritual masters.

It is to this "golden chain" that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi belongs. Born in 1863, at Thana Bhawan, a small town to the east of Delhi, he received his education at Deoband, and at the age of twenty he himself started teaching Islamic sciences at Kanpur. Very soon he became famous as a teacher and as a spiritual guide, mainly through his sermons---hundreds of which have since been appearing in a published form, bringing knowledge and illumination to the Muslims of South Asia. But in 1898, he retired to his home-town, and, beside establishing a school of Islamic learning, revived the spiritual centre ("*Khanqah*") founded by his own master, Haji Imdadullah. For full twenty five years till his death in 1934, he led a life totally devoted to religious instruction and spiritual guidance, and to the writing of books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic---about a thousand, large and small---among which "Bihishti Zewar" is a household word among the Muslims of South Asia. His favourite subject are the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an and Tasawwuf (Islamic esoterism), but he has also made a valuable contribution to Islamic jurisprudence, to the

science of Hadith and to dialectical theology (Ilmul-Kalam). All in all, he emerges, in the sphere of Islamic sciences and Islamic spirituality, as great renovator (Mujaddid) specially meant to answer the intellectual and spiritual needs of the twentieth century man.

The book has been conceived as a reply to certain Muslim "Modernizers" who, under the impact of the 19th century "scientism" and cowed down by the physical might of Western imperialism, fell a prey to all kinds of flimsy doubts and misgivings about Islamic doctrines, and clamoured for a "new" or modernist apologetics even at the cost of sacrificing authenticity. The book lays down certain general and basic principles which can help one to see things for what they are. The principles are, indeed, so quintessential that they can serve as an indispensable guide to the understanding of any religious tradition, beside Islam.

* * * * * * * *

FOREWORD

Praise to Allah, and Peace be on the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم

These days one notice a number of inner perversions that have crept into the religious beliefs and consequently into the religious practice of certain Muslims, and that are daily on the increase. In view of this, people have started talking about the need of compiling a "new" dialectical theology (*`Ilm-ul Kalam-al-jadid*). In the sense of revising the basic principles of the *`Ilm-ul Kalam* as it exists, this demand itself is questionable. For, these principles are quite sufficient and comprehensive, as any scholar, by practicing them, can easily judge and verify for himself with absolute certainty. In the sense of further elaborating these principles, however, this demand may be considered just and valid. But what is "new" in this case is only that certain doubts have newly arisen. In fact, it would demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the "old" *Ilm-ul kalam* all the more conclusively, and show that, no matter what the doubts are and in what age they arise, the same "old" principles are more than sufficient to meet them adequately. Thus, it is essential to get rid of this misunderstanding in defining this demand which has become all too popular.

Another error is still more grave, and calls for an even more urgent correction. In making this demand, what most of the people really intend is this---the injunctions of the *Shari'ah* with regard to the doctrinal beliefs as well as to the religious practices, enjoying universal conformity, resting on explicit statements in the Holy

Qur'an and the Hadith, preserved and handed down from generation to generation, should be so modified in the light of new scientific researches as to bring them in agreement with the latter, even though the validity of these researches is neither confirmed by observation nor proved incontestably by rational argument. This object is patently obsurd. All the propositions which are popularly known as "new" researches" have not attained the degree of certainty; actually, most of them are merely hypothetical and conjectural. Nor are most of them really new, but have been mentioned by the ancient philosophers, and have even been discussed by our own theologians (*mutakallimun*), as one can see for oneself by referring to the books of *`Ilm-ul kalam.*

However, there is no denying the fact that some of the doubts which had ceased to be talked about are being repeated afresh, some are being presented in a new form, while there are others which are new even with regard to their content, for they are founded upon certain assumptions which can justifiably be described as "new researches". It is only in this sense that the set of such doubts can properly be called "new". And, in so far as we mean to combat these doubts which are "new" in this sense, and also because a certain "newness" in the mode of expression may be found useful, making it more suited to the contemporary taste, it would be permissible to describe our solution of these difficulties and our refutation of these doubts as a "new" *`Ilm-ul kalam.* If we interpret the popular demand for compiling a new *`Ilm-ul kalam* in this fashion, there is no point in denying such a need.

In whatever way you may interpret this need, we on our part have for a long time been anxiously considering different forms in which this need could be fulfilled. Some of these forms were

comprehensive, but also voluminous. So, our mind settled on a shorter method. Let all the doubts that are currently being expressed orally or in books be collected and catalogued, and each one of them answered individually. In this way, our answers would be more efficacious in refuting the present doubts, each one of them having been dealt with separately and particularly, and the general principles obtained in the course of discussing the particular and individual doubts should, *Insha-Allah*, prove adequate to refute similar and comparable doubts that may arise in future.

This procedure required that doubts should be compiled together, and the responsibility for this task does not lie only on the man who is to furnish the answers. So, we asked a number of people to help us in this respect. And we waited for a sufficient number of doubts to be compiled, so that we could begin our tasks in the name of Allah.

We were still waiting, when we had to make a journey to Bengal in the beginning of *Dhi Qa'dah* 1327 A.H. We broke the journey at Aligarh in order to meet our younger brother who was posted as a sub--inspector there. Some students of the M.A.O. College came to know of our arrival, and paid us a visit. A group of them informed the Secretary of the College, Nawab Vaqar-ul Umara, and probably requested him to invite us for a sermon. We received a letter to this effect from the Nawab at night, and in the morning he himself came to see us, and took us to the College. This being a Friday, we offered our prayers there, and, as desired, gave a sermon that continued till the time of the afternoon (*'Asr*) prayers. (A brief summary of this sermon has been given in the present book by way of a preface).

From the way the students listened to the sermon we could judge that they had in a certain degree the eagerness and expectancy

to find out the truth; we even saw in them the signs of understanding and discernment. They expressed the desire to be given the opportunity to listen occasionally to our discourses and sermons in future too, for the sake of their reform and edification. This being a service to religion, we were only too happy to accept the suggestion.

Seeing this, we proposed to ourselves a further concision and consequently a little modification even in the shorter plan we had contemplated. We now decided that for the present we should not wait for all individual and particular doubts to be compiled, which was a task requiring the help of others, but should consider only those doubts which we had ourselves heard in the course of our conversations with people, or seen formulated in books, and should try to answer them as far as was necessary in our sermons before the students. Brief summaries of these sermons could then be published in book form for the benefit of those who had not been present. The oral sermon could precede the publication, or it could also be otherwise, depending on the time and the situation. Moreover, if some people would, during the course of this undertaking or before or after it, help us in compiling the doubts, then that earlier plan could also be executed, and a second part could be added to the present work. Failing that, we have our trust in the Almighty Allah, and hope that even this elementary work would be quite sufficient. If the reader can find some one to teach it systematically in detail, the benefit would be all the greater.

If Allah helps some one to compile from the writings of atheists and critics of Islam all those objections and doubts that are based on the confrontation between Islam on the one hand, and science or the new principles introduced by western civilization on the other, and then to write a detailed refutation, such a work would genuinely

deserve the name of a "new" *`Ilm-ul kalam.* In fact, a comprehensive model of such a book has, thanks to Allah, been already published, compiled from the teachings of Husain-al-Jasr-al-Tarabulasi and entitled "Al-Risalah al-Hamidiyyah". Even an Urdu translation under the name of "Science Aur Islam" has appeared and been found useful and attractive by many reader.

May Allah help us in the task and make it easy for us.

By Way of Preface

Sermon delivered at the M.A.O. College

The text of the sermon was a verse of the Holy Qur'an from the chapter "Luqman":

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ إِلَيَّ الخ

"Follow the way of him who has turned to Me....."

Since the sermon was rather long, we would give only a summary here:-

Today we do not propose to speak on a particular theme, but to make a brief survey of the causes which have not so far allowed you to profit from the sermons of the *Ulema*, and which, if not indicated and remedied now, would render such sermons unprofitable in future too. The causes spring from certain deficiencies in you yourselves.

The first of these deficiencies is that although religious doubts are spiritual ailments, yet you do not regard them as ailments. That is why you have never dealt with them in the manner you deal with physical ailments. May Allah protect you from all harm, but whenever it so happens that you fall ill, you never wait for the official physician of the college to come down to your room for himself in order to examine you and to treat you. When you were ill, you must rather have gone to his residence yourself and spoken to him about your illness. And if his treatment did you no good, you

must have gone beyond the boundary of the college to the town, and seen the civil surgeon at the hospital.

And, in case even his treatment did not prove effective, you must have left even the town and made a journey to other cities, and must have spent quite a good sum of money in bearing the expenses of the journey, in paying the doctors and in buying medicines. In short, you had no peace of body or mind until you had fully regained your health. This being so, how is it that when you are affected with religious doubts, you just expect that the *Ulema* themselves should attend you? Why do you not turn to them yourselves? And if, during this quest, one *'alim* fails to restore your health (either because his answer is not sufficient, or because it is not to your taste), why do you not seek other *ulema*? Why do you jump to the conclusion that your problem is insoluble? You should at least have made a thorough search for its solutions. The expense it entails is almost nothing in comparison with what you spent on a physical cure. What could be simpler than to send a reply---paid post card to any religious scholar you choose, and to ask him whatever you like?

The second deficiency is that you too often have an absolute confidence in your own opinion and judgment, and assume that nothing can be wrong with your way of thinking. This is another reason why you never turn to any religious scholar (*'alim*). This in itself is a great error. If you seek a verification of your opinion from the *ulema*, you would soon be aware of the errors you commit.

The third deficiency is that, in religious matters, you are habitually reluctant to follow anyone. That is why you do not accept the authority of any expert in any religious matters, but always pry into the explanations, reasons and arguments of everything, while the truth is that one who is not an expert cannot at all do without

accepting the authority of an expert. This does not mean that the scholars of the Shariah do not possess any reasons or arguments. They do possess all that. But many things are beyond your understanding. Just as it is very difficult to explain at theorem of Euclid to a man who is ignorant of the first principles, definitions and other preliminaries necessary for a proper study of geometry in the same way there are certain sciences which serve as instruments and elementary principles for a study of the injunctions of the Shariah. Any one who wishes to understand them fully must necessarily acquire a knowledge of these sciences to begin with. But the man who has not the time or the inclination to do so, cannot help accepting the authority of some one else.

I would, therefore, advise you to adopt this method. Whenever you have a doubt with regard to any religious matter, you should continue to put it before different *ulema* until it has been finally removed, and should in no case rely on your own judgment. If there is something which you are unable to understand perfectly, you had better admit your own short-coming, and then trust and follow those *ulema* who are really experts in their own field. If you adopt this procedure, I do hope that Allah will help you, and you will soon be able to correct your errors.

Introduction

The Branches of "Hikmah" or Philosophy

What the Greek and Muslim philosophers call *Hikmah* (wisdom), or philosophy, is a general term which does not exclude any science or branch of knowledge, and the Shariah is also included in it. This being so, we have to discuss here as to what *Hikmah* or philosophy is, and how it is classified.

Philosophy is the knowledge of real entities as they are, the object of such knowledge being that the self acquires thereby some kind of excellence. Thus, every science deals with the characteristics of a certain form of reality.

Now, according to a primary classification, philosophy is of two kinds, for all the entities it deals with are either such actions and deeds whose existence lies within the scope of our will and power, or such entities whose existence does not lie within the scope of our will. The knowledge which pertains to the entities of the first kind is called "Practical Philosophy" (*Al-hikmat ul-'Amaliyyah*), and that which pertains to the entities of the second kind is called "Theoretical Philosophy" (*Al-Hikmat-al Nazariyyah*).

Then, each of these two branches of philosophy is further sub-divided into three kinds. For, "practical philosophy" can either deal with the good of the individual in which case it is called "ethics" (*Tahdhibul-Akhlaq*); or with the good of a group of individuals who live in the same house, in which case it is called

"Domestic Economy" (*Tadbirul-Manzil*); or with the good of a group which lives in the same town or country, in which case it is called "Politics" (*Siyasat-ul Mudun*). These are, then, the three branches of "Practical philosophy."

As for "theoretical philosophy", it deals either with the characteristics of such entities as do not intrinsically need any substance for their physical or ideal existence, in which case it is called "Metaphysics" *Ilahiyyat*; or it deals with the characteristics of such entities as need a substance for their physical existence but not for their ideal existence, in which case it is called "Mathematics" (*Riadi*); or it deals with the characteristics of such entities as need a substance both for their physical and ideal existence, in which case it is called "Physics" *`Ilm-al-tabi`ah*. These are, then, the three branches of "Theoretical Philosophy".

Thus, we obtain these six branches of "Wisdom" or philosophy-namely, Ethics, Domestic Economy, Politics, Metaphysics, Mathematics, and Physics. Although there are many more subdivisions, yet the principal classification of philosophy is confined only to these.

Now, we must understand that the real object of the Shariah is to discipline human beings in such a way that they may make the fulfilment of their obligations to the Creator as well as of their obligations to the creatures the means of gaining the pleasure of Allah. In fact, the injunctions of the Shariah with regard to these two duties yield the good of worldly life as well, and when they seem to go against worldly good, it always turns out that public good has been given precedence over individual good, or that the situation entailed a spiritual harm greater than worldly good which has been eliminated. All the same, the real object of the Shariah is the quest

for the pleasure of Allah.

On the other hand, mathematics and physics have nothing to do with the duty of fulfilling one's obligations to God or to the creatures. So, the Shariah has not dealt with these subjects as its proper object. If some topic of physics etc. has now and then been touched upon by the Shariah, it is only by way of an auxiliary instrument and as a proof of some argument in metaphysics, which, as we shall soon show, is one of the object of the Shariah. It is borne out by the fact that the physical phenomena have been referred to in the Holy Qur'an as:

لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ

"Signs (of God) for those who possess understanding" (3:119).

Thus, we are left with only one branch of theoretical philosophy-that is to say, metaphysics---and with all the three branches of practical philosophy. Since all of them are involved in the attainment of the aim mentioned above---that is, fulfilment of the two kinds of obligations---, the Shariah has dealt with them fully. As for the perfect way in which the problems of practical philosophy have been expounded, even the followers of the Greek philosophers have had to admit that "the Islamic Shariah has fulfilled this need in the most perfect manner and with all possible details."

And, in the case of the problems of metaphysics too, a comparative study of the arguments on the two sides---Greek philosophy and Islamic Shariah --- obliges the philosophers to make the same admission.

Thus, the first subject of discussion which properly comes within the scope of the Shariah is metaphysics (*'Ilmul-ilahiyyat*),

one sub-division of which is the "Science of Doctrines and Beliefs" (*'Ilmul-'aqaid*), dealing with topics like Revelation (*Wahy*), Prophethood (*Nubuwwah*) and Life after Death and the Day of Judgment (*Ma'ad*). The second subject of discussion is practical philosophy which has been sub-divided by the Shariah into (a) the injunctions with regard to the relation between man and God---*'Ibadat*; (b) the injunctions with regard to the relations between man and society---*Mu'asharah*; (c) the injunctions with regard to the relations between one man and another---*Mu'amalat*; and (d) the injunctions with regard to the relation between a man and himself---*Akhlaq*.

In short, the sciences which properly belong to the Shariah are five---the four which we have just mentioned, and the Science of Doctrines and Beliefs. We do not propose to deal with all these five elements, but with only those things about which people with a Western education have sometimes come to feel a doubt. Since these doubts are related to belief, the purpose of all our discussions would, in this sense, be to deal with only one element---namely, doctrines and beliefs. Although the proper order would have been to take up for discussion all the problems pertaining only to one of these divisions before turning to the problems off another kind, yet for the sake of making the discussion more attractive and delightful to the readers, it was found more suitable to treat all kinds of problems in a composite way. So, all that we have to say will, with the help of Allah, be presented in this form in the subsequent pages.

For this book we have chosen the title "Intimations" (*Intibahat*).

These very Intimations, in fact, form the main object of this book. Before dealing with the chief topics, we shall explain certain fundamental rules, which stand as first principles in relation to the topics of discussion. While discussing the main topics, we shall have occasion to refer to these rules from time to time, so that one can easily understand and accept what is being said. May the Almighty Allah help us!

ASHRAF ALI
Thana Bhawan,
Muzaffar Nagar District.

First Principles

(1)

One's inability to understand something is no argument for its being false.

When we describe a thing as "false", we really mean to say that a clear and definite argument leads us to conclude that it does not exist. It is evident enough that these two facts---namely, the inability to understand that a certain thing exists, and the certain Knowledge that it does not exist---are totally different from each other. The former (that is, the inability to understand that something exists) signifies that, for lack of observation, our mind has not been able to comprehend the causes and modes of its existence, and hence feels bewildered, and hesitates in determining these causes and modes. But, in this case, beyond wondering how such a thing could exist, our mind can produce no sound argument, rational or based on report, to establish its non-existence. On the other hand, the latter (that is, the knowledge that the thing does not exist) signifies that our mind can produce a sound argument, rational or based on report, to establish its non-existence. For example, a rustic who has never chanced to see railway train, comes to hear that there is a carriage which runs all by itself without being pulled by a beast. He would naturally be bewildered, and wonder as to how it could be so. But, at the same time, he would be unable to produce an argument, to deny this fact, for he does not possess any argument even to prove that the fast and continued motion of a carriage can

have no other cause than being pulled by a beast. This is what we call "the inability to understand." If the rustic begins to deny the fact only on this ground and to refute the reporter, all sensible people would consider him a fool, and the basis of their judgment would be the elementary principle that if a man is unable to understand a certain thing, he is not necessarily entitled to deny its existence. This, then, is an illustration of "the inability to understand" the existence of a thing.

Now, if a man boards a train at Calcutta, and gets down at Delhi, and a second man comes and states in his presence that the train has today covered the journey between Calcutta and Delhi in one hour, the traveller would refute him. And he would possess an argument for this refutation---the argument being his own observation and the witness of one or two hundred other observers who have come by the same train. This is an illustration of proving the non-existence of a thing.

In the same way, let us suppose that a man is told that on the Day of Judgment one will have to cross the bridge called *Sirat* which will be finer than a hair. Since no one has ever seen such a thing happen, it is natural enough that the man should wonder as to how it could be so. But it is also evident that his reason does not possess any argument to refute the statement. For, if there is an argument at all, it can apparently be only this---the human foot is so broad and the place where it is to be put is so narrow, hence it is not possible for the foot to rest on it and to walk on it. But one cannot even prove that it is rationally necessary that the breadth of the patch must be greater than that of the foot. Of course, we may concede that this is the habitual fact according to our observation, that we have not seen anything contrary to it, and if we have at all seen the contrary (for

example, people walking on a rope), we have not found such a great difference of breadth. But is it really impossible that Allah, who is omnipotent, may altogether change this natural or habitual law in the other wold? The man who denies this possibility on the basis of what has habitually been observed, would be placing himself in the position of the rustic who had denied that a railway train could run by itself without being pulled by a beast.

Now, take a different kind of example. If a man were to hear some one declare that on the Day of Judgment Allah the Majestic would honour and exalt the offspring of a certain saint on account of their relationship to him, even without their being genuine Muslims, then such a belief would be repudiated and considered false, for there is a solid argument which proves just the opposite of this belief. The argument in this case being the clear teachings of the Shariah that an infidel cannot attain salvation. .

This, then, is the distinction between what one has not been able to understand and what is "false".

(2)

If a thing is rationally possible, and its existence is attested by sound report, then it is necessary to accept its existence. On the other hand, if its non-existence is attested by sound report, then it is equally necessary to accept its non-existence.

Facts are of three kinds:-

Firstly, those the existence of which is shown to be necessary by reason. For example, let us take the statement "one is the half of two". This is a fact which must exist so necessarily that, having understood the meaning of one and two, reason must consider its

opposite to be false. Such a fact is called "Necessary."

Secondly, those, the non-existence of which is shown to be necessary by reason. For example, let us take the statement "one is equal to two". It is so necessary to deny this fact that reason must certainly consider it to be false. Such a fact is called "Impossible".

Thirdly, those the existence of which is neither affirmed nor denied as of necessity by reason. In such a case, reason considers their existence and non-existence both as equally probable, and in order to arrive at a final judgment must examine an argument based on report. For example, the statement that "the area of such a town is greater than that of the other town" is a fact in the case of which reason must either make a direct examination or accept the findings of those who have made such an examination. Until it adopts either of these two courses, reason cannot regard the statement as necessarily true or necessarily false, but must admit an equal probability of its being true of false. Such a fact is called "Possible".

Therefore, in dealing with a fact which is "possible", if we can find an argument based on sound report to prove that it is true, then it becomes necessary to believe that it does exist and is real. But if the same kind of argument can be found to prove its non-existence, then it is necessary to believe that it does not exist. For example, in the instance of the comparative areas of two towns, we would, on examination, judge the statement in some cases to be true and in other cases to be false.

Similarly, it is rationally possible for the Heavens to exist as the Muslims in general believe them to do. That is to say, reason does not possess any argument either to confirm or to deny this fact, but

admits both the probabilities. So, in order to decide whether such a thing does exist or not, reason has to depend on an argument based on report. And such an argument based on sound report is provided by the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, declaring that such a thing does exist. So, reason must, as of necessity, affirm the existence of the Heavens.

If some one were to consider the Pythagorean system to be an argument based on report, proving that the Heavens do not exist, then such an opinion would only show his ignorance or lack of understanding. For, the only valid inference that you can draw from it is that the correctness of the calculations according to that system, does not depend on the existence or the motion of the Heavens. No, if an actual fact does not depend for its existence on another fact, its existence does not prove that the latter does not exist. For example, if an actual work does not depend on a certain government official to be performed, how can the presence of this work alone prove that the official is not present in the town? At the most, one can only say that this fact does not prove his presence either. But, one can find other arguments (based on sound report) proving that the officer was present.

(3)

What is rationally impossible is something totally different from what is merely improbable. The impossible is opposed to reason itself, while the improbable is opposed merely to habit. The predicates of reason and those of habit are quite distinct, and it is erroneous to identify them with each other. What is impossible can never exist, but what is merely improbable may exist. It is the impossible alone which can be described as irrational, while the improbable is only something which reason cannot under-

stand by itself. It is a great error to confuse the one with the other.

The impossible is that, the non-existence of which is shown by reason to be necessary (as we have explained with an example under Principle No. 2). And the improbable is that the existence of which is allowed by reason, but since no one has ever seen it to exist nor heard of it from sufficient number of observers when one comes to hear of its existence, one is at first astonished and perplexed (as we have explained with an example under Principle No. 1, while discussing the "inability to understand"). The necessary deductions which follow from these two are quite distinct. It is necessary to reject the impossible outright merely on the ground of its being impossible, while it is not even permissible to reject and deny the improbable merely on the ground of its being improbable. Of course, if there are, beside improbability, other arguments for its rejection, then it is not only permissible, but even necessary to reject it.

As we have seen in the first and the second illustrations given under principles No. 1 and No. 2, if some one were to say that "one is equal to two". It is necessary to reject this statement, but if one were to say that "a railway train runs without being pulled by a beast", it is not permissible to reject this statement, even though such a thing should be improbable and astonishing for a man who has so far, in the habitual course of things, only seen carriages being pulled by beasts. In fact, all those things which are not supposed to be astonishing are all in reality very astonishing, but since we have repeatedly observed them to be like this and have grown used to them, this familiarity does not allow us to pay any attention to their being really so astonishing, while in actual fact they are probable and improbable in equal degree.

Let us take two examples — on the one hand, the railway train running as it does, and, on the other, the male seed entering the womb and becoming there a human and living form. Is there any essential difference between the two cases from the present point of view? Essentially, the second case is the more astonishing fact. But the rustic who has never seen the first case but has repeatedly been observing the second since his childhood, would consider the former to be very astonishing, and would not consider the latter to be at all astonishing, though it is much more so.

Similarly, the man who has become habituated to see a gramophone speak but has never seen human hands and feet doing so, does not consider such an action on the part of the gramophone to be at all astonishing, but feels astonished when he hears of the same action emanating from hands and feet. It would not matter very much if he finds it only astonishing, but the great and regrettable error is that he should consider what is merely astonishing to be impossible as well, and taking it for granted that such a thing is impossible, should go to the extent of denying a clear statement in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, or should proceed to make unnecessary and false interpretations.

In short, it is a great error to treat a certain fact as impossible merely on the ground of its being improbable. Of course, if, beside improbability, one can find some other valid argument also to prove that such a thing does not exist, then it becomes necessary to negate it, as we have already said under Principle No. 1, in presenting the example of the train which was supposed to have covered the distance between Calcutta and Delhi in an hour. On the other hand, if one can find a valid argument to prove its existence but cannot find an argument having the same degree of validity to prove its

non-existence, then it would be necessary to affirm its existence. For example, in those days when wireless telegraphy had not yet come into vogue and people had not generally heard of it, if some one had reported that he had seen such a thing for himself, and if we did not already possess a proof of his being truthful, in that case there could be some apparent, though not real, ground for rejecting his statement as false. But if we did possess a sure and certain proof of his being truthful, there could be no ground whatsoever for rejecting his report.

These, then, are the different predicates of what is impossible and what is merely improbable. On this basis we must say that as the passage of people over the bridge of *Sirat* is not impossible but only improbable, and as a truthful reporter (namely, the Holy Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has reported to us that this fact is real and does actually exist, it would be a great rational error to deny and reject the report about this passage over the bridge. Similarly, it is a vain and senseless effort to try to interpret it away.

(4)

If a thing exists, it is not necessary that it must also be sensible and visible.

There are three ways in which one can justifiably predicate of a fact that it is true:-

(1) On the basis of personal observation—for example, we ourselves see Zaid coming.

(2) On the basis of a report from a truthful reporter—for example, some trustworthy man reports to us that Zaid has come. But our acceptance of such a report will depend on the condition that we cannot find a stronger argument to refute the report. For

example, some one reports to a man that Zaid came last night, and wounded the listener with a sword. But the listener knows that he has not been wounded by any one, nor is he wounded at the present moment. In this case, personal observation is there to refute the report. So, we would conclude that the report is not true, and that the alleged fact is not real.

(3) On the basis of a rational argument---for example, although one has not seen the sun rising nor has any one made such a report, yet merely by seeing the sunlight one's reason at once recognises that the sun has already risen, for one knows that the existence of sunlight depends on the rising of the sun.

Among these three facts which we have just examined existence is common to all, but only one of them is perceptible by the senses, while the other two are not. This goes to prove that when we say that a certain fact does exist, it is not necessary that it should also be perceptible by the senses. Nor is it necessary that fact which is not perceptible by the senses should, on that ground alone, be considered as non-existent.

For example, explicit and clear verses of the Holy Qur'an have reported to us that there are above us seven great bodies which are called the Heavens. Now, if we cannot see them because of this visible blue tent above our heads, it is not rationally necessary that, merely on the ground of their not being perceptible by the sense, we should negate their existence. On the contrary, it is possible that they do exist, and since a truthful reporter (namely, the Holy Qur'an) has given us a report about them, it is rationally necessary to affirm their existence, as we have already shown under Principle No. 2.

(5) It is not possible to prove a purely reported fact by a purely rational argument. So it is not also permissible to demand such an argument.

Under Principle No. 4, we have shown that among the different kinds of facts there is one, the existence of which is made known to us only by the report of a truthful reporter. The term "pure report" refers to such facts. It is evident enough that one cannot argue about such facts on the basis of a purely rational argument, as is possible in the case of the third kind of facts (discussed under Principle No. 4).

For example, some on tells us that Alexander and Darius were two kings who went into battle against each other. Now, if another person were to demand a rational argument in order to establish this fact, even the greatest philosopher would not be able to present any other argument except this---the existence of two such kings and a war between them is not impossible, but possible enough, and trustworthy historians have reported that this possibility did actually come into existence, and since it is rationally necessary to affirm a fact as real when we learn from a truthful reporter that what was possible did really come into existence (as we have shown under Principle No. 3), we must necessarily accept the report about the two kings as an actual fact.

Similar is the case of the coming of the Day of Judgment, the resurrection of the dead, and the beginning of a new life. All these facts are pure reports, and even their characteristics in detail are vouched by pure report. So, if a man affirms these facts, no one can justifiably demand a purely rational argument from him. It would be quite sufficient for him to say in order to silence all objections-

--there is no argument to prove that these facts are rationally impossible, even though one may not understand them; but as these two things are not identical (as explained under Principle No.1), these facts are rationally possible, and moreover, as a reporter whose truthfulness is well established on just grounds, has reported to us that this possibility shall actually come into existence, therefore we must, according to Principle No. 2, necessarily affirm the existence and actuality of these facts. This reply, then, would be quite sufficient on the part of the man who affirms them. If he proceeds to provide a purely rational argument as well in support of his affirmation, his only intention would be to do away with the dubeity arising from improbability, and to remove the perplexity of his listeners. But the man who is arguing for this case would not owe this further explanation to his listeners---it would be an act of generosity on his part, and a mere concession, if he provides it.

(6)

There is some difference between a precedent and an argument. It may be justifiable to demand an argument from the man who makes an assertion, but it is not valid to demand a precedent from him.

Let us suppose that a man asserts that King George V held his coronation at Delhi. Now, another man comes and says, "we shall accept this statement as true only when you cite a precedent to show that an English king has done it before, but if you fail to provide such a precedent, we shall consider the event to be unreal." Would it, in this case, be obligatory for the man who makes the assertion to cite a precedent, o vould it not be quite sufficient for him to say, "we do not possess a.y precedent for this event, but we do have a sound argument, since we have heard about it from people who observed

it for themselves? But if he can cite no observer, it would be sufficient to say that it has been published in the newspapers. Once this argument has been presented, would it really be necessary to wait for a precedent in order to accept the event as real?

Similarly, if a man assets that human hands and feet will speak on the Day of Judgment, no one can have the right to demand a precedent from him, nor can any one justifiably refute them merely on the ground that he has failed to cite a precedent. Of course, it is obligatory for him to put forward an argument in support of his contention. But since his contention can be established only on the basis of a pure report, it would be more than sufficient for him to argue as follows, according to Principle No. 5:---since there is no rational argument to prove that this fact is impossible, and a truthful reporter has reported to us that it will actually happen, so it is rationally necessary to affirm its existence and its actuality. However, if he provides a precedent as well, it will be a concession on his part, and an act of generosity. For instance, he may cite the gramophone as a precedent to show that even a lifeless object can produce sounds and words. What a pity that today people with a Western education demand a precedent for everything that has been reported by the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith! They should try to understand that this is a case of considering what is unnecessary as necessary.

(7)

Only four situations are rationally possible in which there can be a contradiction between a rational argument and an argument based on report:-

(i) Both the arguments should be final and conclusive. Such a situation cannot exist, as it is impossible for two truths to

contradict each other.

(ii) Both should be approximative. Although in this situation there is room for reconciling the two arguments by turning them away from the literal sense and giving them some other interpretation, yet, according to the regular rule of human language that the basic sense in all words is the literal and apparent one, we would take the report in its literal sense, and would not consider the connotation of the rational argument as valid.

(iii) The argument based on report should be final, while the rational argument should be approximative. Here the report would certainly be given precedence over the other argument.

(iv) The rational argument should be final, while the argument based on report should be approximative, either in respect of its connotation or in respect of its authenticity. Here the rational argument would be given precedence, and the report would be interpreted in a nonliteral sense.

Thus, the last situation is the only one in which Reason (*Dirayah*) is to be given precedence over Tradition (*Riwayah*). And it is not justifiable to adopt this procedure in all possible situations.

It is self-evident what a "rational argument" is, while an "argument based on report" is the information provided by a truthful reporter, as has been explained under principle No.4. As for a "contradiction". It is the opposition of two statements in such a manner that if we accept one of them to be true, we must necessarily consider the other to be false. For example, a man reports that Zaid took a train for Delhi at 10 a.m. this day. Now, another man reports that Zaid was sitting with him in his house at 11 a.m. the same day. The opposition of these two statements would be called a "contradiction."

Since, in the case of a contradiction, it is necessary for one of the two statements to be false so that the other may be true, two valid arguments can never enter into such a contradiction. When two arguments contradict each other, the problem would be solved like this. If both are equally valid, we shall turn one of them away from its literal sense, and by giving it a secondary interpretation accept it, and we shall accept the other as well in retaining its literal sense, thus reconciling the two arguments. On the other hand, if one of the arguments is valid while the other is not, we shall accept the former and reject the latter. For example, in the case cited above, if one of the reporters is trustworthy and the other is not, we shall accept the report of the one who is trustworthy and reject that of the other who is untrustworthy. If both of them are equally trustworthy. We shall judge the matter in the light of other indications, and thus accept one of the reports literally, and give some kind of a secondary interpretation to the second in order to reconcile the two. For example, if we come to know for certain on the basis of other kinds of evidence too that Zaid did not go to Delhi at all, we shall assume that the second reporter had made a wrong surmise about Zaid's departure, or that Zaid left for the station and then came back without boarding the train, but the second reporter had no information of his return, or something else like this.

Having learnt this rule we should now consider that sometimes there is an apparent contradiction between a rational argument and an argument based on report. In such a case, we shall, according to this rule, have to judge whether (a) both the arguments are certain and final; or (b) both are approximative; or (c) the argument based on report is final, while the rational one is approximative; or (d) the rational argument is final, while the argument based on report is approximative, either in respect of its authenticity or in respect of

its connotation. (That is to say, an argument based on report can be approximative in two respect. Firstly, it may be approximative in respect of its authenticity. For example, a tradition of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which has not been widely and consecutively reported. Secondly, it may be approximative in respect of its connotation. For example, a certain verse of the Holy Qur'an, which is certainly and finally authentic, but yields two connotations neither of which is conclusive.) These, then, are the four situations in which a contradiction can arise.

As for (a), where both the arguments are final in respect of authenticity as well as in respect of connotation, and yet contradict each other, such a situation cannot possibly exist. For, when the two are certainly true, how can truths contradict each other? If they do, it is not possible for them to be equally true. Let a man try for all he is worth, he can never produce a single instance of such a situation.

As for (b), there are sound arguments that make it necessary to accept an argument based on report which approximates to being true, as one can see by referring to the books on the fundamental principles of the Shariah and on '*Ilm-ul Kalam*. On the other hand, there is no sound argument to make it necessary to accept a rational argument which approximates to being true. So, in this situation, we shall give precedence to the argument based on report, and shall consider the rational argument to be erroneous. Indeed, the very fact of its being approximative in itself indicates the possibility of its being erroneous. So, in holding it to be erroneous, we shall not be going against the requirements of reason. Although, in this situation, one way of accepting the argument based on report could also be to turn is away from its literal sense in order to reconcile it with the rational argument, yet, unnecessary indulgence in secondary

interpretations being forbidden and there being no real need for it here, the Shariah prohibits the adoption of this procedure as being an "innovation", and it is not commendable even rationally, as we have just explained.

As for (c), it must be dealt, with all the more like situation (b), because when an argument based on report is, in spite of being approximative, to receive precedence over an approximative rational argument, a final argument based on report is all the more worthy of receiving precedence over an approximative rational argument. Argument based on report is all the more worthy of receiving precedence over an approximative rational argument.

As for (d), we cannot reject the rational argument, for it is final in its validity, but we can no more reject the argument based on report also, for sound arguments make it necessary to accept it---as we have shown while discussing situation (b). So in this situation, we shall give the approximative argument based on report a secondary interpretation, and accept it only by bringing it into consonnance with the rational argument. This is the only specific situation which justifies the contention that Reason (*Dirayah*) is to be given precedence over Tradition (*Riwayah*). But it is not permissible to make such an assertion or to act upon it in situation (b) and (c) as we have already proved in detail.

Of course, a fifth and a sixth situation can also arise that is, the argument based on report should be approximative while the rational argument should be hypothetical and fanciful, or the former should be final while the latter should again be hypothetical. But it goes without saying that in both the situations the argument based on report will be given precedence, and the rational argument will

be rejected. For, when a rational argument, in spite of its approximating to being true, is given a secondary position and rejected, a hypothetical and fanciful argument deserves this treatment all the more. A precedent for this has been cited while situation(v) was being discussed.

This, then, is the detailed account of the situations in which a contradiction may rise between rational arguments and arguments based on report. It clearly exposes the error of those who give an absolutely principal position to a rational argument and only a subordinate one to an argument based on report, even if the former is not approximative but only hypothetical, and the latter is final.

We shall give illustrations only for situations (b) and (d). For, situation (a) cannot possible exist, while (c) is all the more to be treated like (d) as we have shown above. So, the two illustrations would be quite sufficient.

Here is an illustration for (b). The Holy Qur'an says:

قوله تعالى: وَهُوَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ الَّیْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِیْ فَلَكٍ یَّسْبَحُوْنَ

"And it is He Who has created the night and the day, the sun and the moon all swim in the sky". (21:33)

The explicit sense of this verse establishes the fact that the sun moves from one position to another. On the other hand, certain scientists believe that the sun only rotates on its axis. But there is no final rational argument to establish this contention. So, it will be rationally necessary to reject this opinion, and to affirm that the sun moves from one position to another.

Now, an illustration for(d). Conclusive and final rational arguments have established the fact that the sun is disjunct from the

earth, and never touches it in any position of its motion. Now, the Holy Qur'an says:

وجدها تغرُبُ فى عينٍ حمئةٍ

"He found it setting in a muddy spring". (18:86)

The apparent sense of these words may lead one un-flectingly to surmise that the sun always set in a muddy spring. But this apparent sense would, on reflection, seem to arise from what a man may imagine at first sight. So, this verse will be interpreted to mean that Dhul Qarnain, looking at the sun, thought as it was setting in a muddy spring, just as to the people, travelling on the sea, it seems as if the sun were setting in the sea. Allah alone knows best!

Intimation (1)

Regarding the Temporality of Matter

By putting their faith in Western science and following its lead blindly, many Muslims have fallen into two grave errors with regard to the doctrine of the unity of God which is the very basis of Islam. In committing these errors, such blind followers of science are being fully faithful neither to science nor to Islam,as we mean to show presently.

The first of these errors is that they thus associate another thing with Allah the Exalted in the quality of being eternal which is peculiar to Him alone;that is to say, they believe matter as well to be eternal. The Greek philosophers too have been guilty of this error. But they, at least, had some kind of argument, however, flimsy and dependent upon a sophistical use of words (this argument has been thoroughly examined and exposed in the books of Muslim philosophers like the *Hidayat-ul Hikmah* and we ourselves have shown its falsity in *Dirayatul`Ismah*.

On the other hand, modern scientists and their followers do not possess an argument which could pretend to even that much degree of validity. As in the case of their other assertions, they have pronounced a judgment which is no more than a presumption. In other words, they have started with the assumption that if all the existants were at one time in a state of pure non-existence, one cannot understand how they could come into existence out of pure nothingness. But one should reflect carefully over the problem, and

ask oneself if the inability to understand a thing can serve as a valid argument for its being false. As for that, one cannot understand either how the existence of a thing, namely, matter, should not itself be preceded by non-existence, when all the modes of its existence, or, in other words, each one of the material changes that it undergoes, is preceded by non-existence. What, after all, is the difference between the existence of a thing(which is matter) and the succeeding modes of existence(to which it is subject)?

Thus, if the inability to understand is a valid objection, it applies to the eternity of matter and to the non-eternity of matter equally, while there is something more to the eternity of matter there is a substantial argument in refutation of it. This argument very easily disposes of the contention of modern science; with a little adaptation, it can avail against the greek science as well.

Let us explain what we mean. Modern science believes that primeval matter was for a long time devoid of any substantial form (*As-suratul-jismiyyah*). Now, it is an established fact that it is impossible for matter to be abstracted from form, because matter signifies a potential existence, while that which gives it an actual existence is form. And it is evident that potential existence means no more than the ability to exist. Therefore, the statement that matter exists without form is a contradiction in terms, and amounts to saying that two contraries can come together, and that something exists in act and at the same time does not exist in act. The logical conclusion of this line of reasoning is that matter, far from being eternal, should not exist at all.

If we now turn to the ancient Greek philosophy, and, adopting its points of view, assume that matter has some kind of form, we shall find that, evidently enough, no substantial form (*As-suratul-*

jismiyyah) can exist without a generic form (*As-suratun-nau'iyyah*), and no generic form can exist without a specific form (*As-suratush-shakhsiyyah*). So, when we posit some kind of a form in matter, we shall necessarily be positing a specific form as well in it. But the specific form keeps on changing therefore, when matter acquires a second specific form after the first, the situation cannot but involve either of these two states --- the previous specific form would either remain there, or perish. If it remains, a new problem would arise. The individuality of an entity lese in its specific form. If there exist two specific forms in one entity, it means that there are two entities, not one. Thus, it becomes necessary that one individual, entity is at the same time two separate entities. And this is obviously impossible. On the other hand, if the previous specific form does perish altogether, then it cannot have been eternal, for it is impossible for the eternal to perish. Therefore, it must have been temporal. And the same argument demonstrates that the specific form which existed before this one was also temporal.

Therefore, when each one of the specific forms turns out to be temporal, the specific form itself must be temporal. And if the specific form is non-existent, the generic form too must be non-existent; and if the generic form is non-existent, the substantial form too must be non-existent. And, finally when the substantial form is non-existent. matter itself must be non-existent. Consequently,the belief in the eternity of matter is false.

Now, as for the inability to understand how something can come into existence out of nothingness, we shall simply point out that such an occurrence should be called improbable, and not impossible. And the improbable is not something that is incapable of coming into existence. Confusing the imporbable with the impossible leads to many errors.

This demonstration has made it clear that the belief in the eternity of matter is repugnant to Islam. And those Muslims who follow the lead of the scientists in this matter, go against modern science too, because the scientists do not believe in God Himself. That is why we had remarked that such Muslims are true neither to Islam nor to Science.

And if you ponder rightly, it is evident that so long as one believes in the eternity of matter, there is no need nor necessity for him to believe in the Creator at all. For, when matter is in itself the very cause of its own existence, it means that matter is a necessary being. And it is quite irrational to posit that one necessary being can be in need of another necessary being. The kind of relationship that exists between God and His attributes and act, can, on this ground, be equally supposed to exist between matter and its attributes like motion and heat, its operations, diversities etc. etc. Thus,the very belief in the existence of God necessarily postulates the temporality of matter.

If a distinction is made between the eternal-in-itself (that is, God) and the eternal-in-time (that is,matter), then such arguments advanced by certain Greek philosophers have been decisively refuted in our old'*Ilm-ul Kalam.* Since the philosophers of the present day do not seem to uphold this argument,we shall pass by this objection.

Again,one may maintain the eternity of the parts of matter in conjunction with form, and also maintain the coexistence of that form with all subsequent forms by asserting that the final constituents of matter are the atoms which can admit of a rational and conjectural division but are physically indivisible (e.g.,the affirmation of the atoms on the part of Democritus). Or one may maintain

that primeval matter (or substance) was initially a unified whole, containing form within itself, but was divisible, and later on split into component parts. We would like to know whether these particles or component parts, being eternal as posited, were at that stage in motion or at rest. If they were in motion, their motion too was eternal; if they were at rest, their rest was equally eternal. But at the present stage we see certain bodies in motion, and this motion is shared by every particle or component part of the body. This fact negates the eternity of rest. In the same way, we find certain other bodies at rest, which negates the eternity of motion. In short, we do observe motion and rest both, and we see both of them perishing. But it is impossible for the eternal to perish. Hence, neither the motion of these constituent parts nor their rest can possibly be eternal. Since these parts cannot be devoid of either of the two states, it goes to prove finally that they themselves are not eternal.

Now, let us turn to the objection that if matter is taken to be temporal, one cannot understand how God could have drawn being out of nothingness. To begin with, this mode of creation is not impossible but merely improbable, and the objection is an attempt to argue about what one has never observed on the basis of what one has never observed. Moreover, it is equally difficult to understand how a changeable thing should also be eternal. Thus, the inability to understand is common to both the cases. Therefore, this objection is not valid as an argument.

In short, it becomes crystal clear that the eternity of matter is absolutely impossible and false.

Even if we set aside all the arguments we have advanced, and do not consider the eternity of matter to be impossible, we are still

unable to find an argument which could establish the eternity of matter as something real. It means that eternity and non-eternity both may be equally probable, and that it would be rationally possible to maintain either of the two positions. But, in a situation like this where both the alternatives are equally admissible, if a truthful reporter asserts one of them, it becoms rationally necessary to accept it. And in this debate about the nature of matter, Allah Himself and the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم have declared which alternative to choose--namely, the temporality of matter.

بَدِيْعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالأَرْضِ

> Says the Holy Qur'an: "(Allah) has created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. (2:117)

And the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم says:

كان الله ولم يكن معه شيئ

"Allah was, and there was no other thing with Him".

Thus, even according to the Islamic Tradition, it is necessary to affirm the temporality of matter.

This then, is the refutation of the first error. We shall now turn to the second.

Intimation (2)

Regarding the Omnipotence of God

The substance of the first error, as we have been discussing, was to transfer an attribute peculiar to God alone to something other than God. And the substance of the second error is to negate one attribute of the perfection of God– that attribute being omnipotence. We say this because nowadays it has become too common a practice among people with a Western education to say or to write that nothing can ever happen contrary to law of Nature. They try to prove this assertion into ways--sometimes they advance a rational argument, and sometimes they argue from the Traditional sources.

The rational argument they employ runs like this :-- We observe, for example, that fire always burns, and have never seen the opposite; or, we daily observe that a child is born of its father and mother, and have never see the opposite; hence, we can conclude that anything which violates the rule of Natural would necessarily be a rational impossibility. It is on this principle that these people have denied miracles which are unusual or unhabitual things. They deny some of the miracles quite explicitly by repudiating the report itself, and in the case of others, where an outright rejection is not possible because of there being a definite and clear statement in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith, they deny implicitly by resorting to false interpretations and rationalizations. This being their attitude to the miracles performed by the prophets, it is no wonder that they should summarily dismiss the miracles performed

by the saints. And the basis of such a dismissal is always the same assumption that it is rationally impossible for things to go against the law of Nature.

Our readers can see for themselves that this assertion is a proposition which needs to be proved before it is accepted. And it would not serve as a valid argument to mention the more fact that one has never seen such a thing before. For, in this case the method of induction has been used. But, in employing this method, one observes only a few particulars out of many, and if we apply a general conclusion based on the observation of a few particulars to other particulars also, such a procedure cannot give us a certain proof. Of course, the conclusion may be taken to be proved, not in the degree of certainty but of probability only, for other particulars as well.

But this probability would be confirmed as a certain proof only when it is not contradicted by a more sound argument. And, even in this situation, we can only say that it is always likely to happen like that, not that it must necessarily happen like that always--unless we can prove that it is impossible that is should not happen like that. In order to negate the possibility of the opposite proposition, one will have to produce a definite argument. If a more sound argument is already there to contradict the probability, the latter will not possess even this much efficacy, and one will have to follow that stronger argument.

Thus, when there is no argument to negate the possibility of the other alternative,and there is a stronger argument to prove for some particulars the opposite of what has been posited for some other particulars, why should one not take this stronger argument to be conclusive? Or, why should one be guilty of subjecting this stronger

argument to a far-fetched interpretation? For, every secondary interpretation involves a turning away from the explicit and literal sense. So, one may not resort to it without there being a need for it. And here there is no need for it. Then, why should one adopt such a course? Otherwise, one can with equal ease subject everything to such conjectural interpretations, and by creating unnecessary doubts leave no text or evidence which could be used as a conclusive argument.

The other way of attempting to establish this assertion is to appeal to the authority of the Islamic Tradition, and to cite this verse of the Holy Qur'an as evidence:

وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللهِ تَبْدِيلًا

"And you will not find any change in the way of Allah". (35:43)

This being a verse of the Holy Qur'an, it is, no doubt, an authentic argument. But whether this argument proves the proposition depends on two conditions. Firstly, the word "Sunnah" (way) should mean the way or practice of God in respect of all matters. Secondly, the agent of the "change" should be indefinite, not and include God as well as other --than --God. But there are no arguments to prove these two contentions. In the context in which the word "Sunnah" occurs, it may, rather it does apply to certain particular and definite matters which have been explicitly mentioned in those verses, the substance of which is the domination of truth over falsehood either through a conclusive argument or by force of arms. Even if we take the word "Sunnah" (way) to have a wider and general connotation (namely, the practice of God in respect of all matters), the subject of the verb "to change" is not God, but other--than--God, and the verse actually means that no one

else can possibly "change" the habitual way or usual practice, of God, as does sometimes happen in our worldly life when a royal command is obstructed by the opposition of a rebellious party. The purport of this phrase in the Holy Qur'an will then be to confirm the promise of reward and the threat of punishment already made.

We have come across even a third way of proving the assertion that nothing can go against the law of Nature, which is composed of a rational argument and an argument based on Tradition. Thus, it is said that "the habitual way of Allah" is a promise in the form of an act, and, according to an explicit statement in the Holy Qur'an, it is impossible that a promise made by Allah should change. The first of these contentions is rational, and the second is Traditional. Now, the second contention is true without any exception, while the first is not acceptable.

We shall explain what we mean by taking an example. We have already established that the material world is not eternal, but created and temporal. Now, let us suppose that the earth went on having rains in the rainy season year by year, and this became established as the habitual process. But there once came a rainy season when there was a complete drought. This had happened for the first time, and it did not as yet form a part of the habitual process. If the habit of getting rains in the rainy season was "a promise in the form of an act", how did things go against this promise ? The variations of matter are all of them contingent and temporal. When a certain species appeared for the first time in matter, and the individuals of the same species went on appearing for a long time, this became established as a habit. Now was it, then, that the individuals of a different species being to appear--either through evolution, as men of science say, or through germination, as people of truth have

solidly established?

At this stage, one may raise still another objection, and say that all this did not go against the habitual way, for the habitual way, in the real sense, is the sequence of physical causes and effects, and thence one should include all these divergent phenomena in the habitual way. To this new assertion we would reply that since physical causes themselves are in need of being manipulated by the Divine Power and of being related to the Divine Will, this principle (i.e. physical causes produce certain effects) would itself have to depend on a more basic principle(i.e. physical causes are controlled by Divine Power and Will). So, the latter alone would genuinely be called the habitual way. And it would still hold good, even when things go against scientific laws. Seen from this point of view, what is seemingly opposed to the habitual way actually turns out to be in perfect conformity with it. As far as the external form is concerned, one may say that it is something opposed to the habitual way, but with regard to the essential reality, it has to be admitted that it is in complete accord with the habitual way. This being so, is there any special need for denying or distorting facts?

Intimation (3)

Regarding Prophethood

Nowadays one finds people committing a number of fatal errors with regard to prophethood. The first of these errors concerns the nature of Revelation (*Wahy*) . Some of those who pretend to be an authority on interpreting religious matters on the basis of their individual opinion, have expressed themselves on the subject in some such manner :-- "There are men who temperamentally have a passionate love for their nation and an extraordinary zeal for its welfare. On account of this Passion, such a man is unremittingly dominated by thoughts of this nature. Since this domination amounts to an obsession, his imagination begins to provide him certain ideas. This obsession sometimes leads him to feel as if he is hearing a voice or seeing a shape, and some-times this shape appears to be talking to him. But, as a matter of fact, this voice or shape or speech has no objective and external existence, and all such things are no more than imaginary entities".

But such an explanation of the nature of prophethood is directly opposed to the explicit and clear statements on the subject in the Holy Quran and the authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم , where we are told without a shade of ambiguity that revelation is a special favour which comes down to a prophet from Allah through the medium of an angel. This angel sometimes brings an inspiration (as the Hadith puts it: "he inspired my heart"), sometimes his voice is heard and sometimes he appears

and speaks in bodily form (as the Hadith states: "sometimes the angel come to me having assumed a form").

The followers of modern science reject such accounts, because they deny the very existence of the angels, and without any valid argument too. We shall, with the help of Allah, examine this opinion in a subsequent Intimation, while discussing the existence of the angels, which will demonstrate that the existence of angels is not rationally impossible, and when a sound report is there to prove the existence of what is rationally possible, it becomes rationally necessary to affirm its existence (according to Principle No. 2).

The second error is related to the miracles, by which are meant those events that occur without the intervention of physical causes. The followers of science refuse to accept the occurrence of such events too, and again without any valid argument. For this reason, they proceed to make far-fetched rationalizations (which, in truth, are perversions) of the miracles which have been reported in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, so that the miracles could be made to look like habitual facts. Some of these events are so thoroughly rationalized that they altogether cease to be unusual or extra-ordinary --as in the case of verse:

إِضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ

"Strike the rock with your stick" --(7:160)

An incident reported of the prophet Moses عليه السلام who had drawn water out of a rock by striking it with his stick. And when it is not possible to explain away the element of wonder, they classify a miracle under procedures like mesmerism or hypnotism -- as in the case of the stick of the prophet Moses عليه السلام changing into

a dragon.

The argument which forms the basis of such a doubt has already been refuted under Intimation No.2. If one insists on seeking the physical causes of things, one will have to go on tracing one cause back to another, and the chain will continue as infinitum, which is impossible. Therefore, one must concede that an Omnipotent Being has created the physical causes themselves without the mediation of any physical cause. This being so, the effects of the physical causes too without the mediation of any physical cause. This being so, the same Omnipotent Being can, if He so wishes, create the effects of the physical causes too without the mediation of any physical cause. This being so, the same Omnipotent Being can, if He so wishes, create the effects of the physical causes too without the mediation of any physical cause. At the most, one can call such a thing improbable, but the improbable and the impossible are not identical. (See Principle No.3).

The third error is that miracles are not adjudged to be a proof of prophethood, but the excellence of a prophet's teaching and the excellence of his moral conduct are supposed to be the only valid arguments for establishing his prophethood. But not arguments can be advanced in support of this limitation except that if supernatural events are taken to be a proof of prophethood, then mesmerism and conjuring tricks too will have to considered as essential for prophethood. But it is a very flimsy argument, because mesmerism and conjuring tricks are not, in fact, supernatural events, but can be referred back to hidden physical causes, which the experts of such arts can easily detect, and thus rightfully deny the impostor who has been laying a claim to prophethood on this basis, and can even challenge him in the art of showing such tricks. But one of those

who stood up to deny the miracles of the prophets عليهما السلام did ever point out to any such physical cause, nor could any one successfully challenge them. This clearly goes to show that the miracles of the prophets عليهما السلام are in actual fact supernatural. Therefore, miracles and conjuring tricks do not equally become necessary for prophethood--it is miracles alone which enjoy this title.

Of course, the excellence of teaching and the excellence of moral conduct too are proofs of prophethood. But Divine Wisdom has Its own ways of disposing things. The audience of the prophets عليهما السلام was composed of two kinds of people. On the one hand were the elite--people who had intelligence enough to recognize the highest excellence of teaching and moral conduct (which is in itself a miracle). On the other hand were the dull-witted ordinary people who, being unable to recognize the highest degree of excellence, could not derive the correct conclusion from the testimony of teaching and moral conduct, and were thus liable to the fatal error of accepting every just and good man as a prophet. So, Divine Wisdom ordained a special mode of argument which should be proper to their level of understanding, and which should provide a compulsive recognition of the validity of the claim to prophethood without requiring any exertion of the will or of the mind on their part. Moreover, they could not possibly confuse the prophets with conjurors, because they could see for themselves that experts in the arts of conjuring owned their helplessness to challenge them.

The fourth error is that the teachings and injunctions of a prophet are supposed to be exclusively concerned with the affairs of the other world, while in the affairs of this word one is supposed to be absolutely independent of such injunctions. The Holy Qur'an

and the Hadith believe such a supposition in explicit terms. For example, take this verse:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا

> "When Allah and His prophet have pronounced a judgment, it is not permissible for a Muslim man or woman to exercise a personal choice in his or her affairs. And whosoever disobeys Allah and His prophet has manifestly strayed from the right path". (33:36)

The occasion on which this verse was revealed was actually a matter of purely mundane nature. As for the tradition of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم usually called *Hadith-ul-Ta'bir*, which has caused doubts in some minds, it is to be noted that it applies to matters regarding which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم expressed a mere opinion or advice, and not to matters regarding which he laid down a definite injunction. In order to make the point still more clear we cite a rational instance. It is a matter of everyday experience that our worldly ruler, through the laws which they make, do interfere with our personal and private affairs too. Then, should the only true and real Ruler not have this right?

(1) This Hadith relates how the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم asked the people of Madinah not to intergraft male and female palm-trees, but when the produce turned out to be scanty that year, he remarked:

أنتم أعلم بامور دنياكم (مشكوة)

"You yourselves know better the affairs of your world".

A fifth error comes out of the fourth as a corollary. That is to say,

it is supposed that the injunctions of the Shariah regarding worldly affairs may be modified in accordance with the requirements of every age. Had these injunctions not been laid down as ends in themselves (as is the substance of the fourth error), there would not have been any harm in holding such an opinion. But, since it is an established fact that they are ends in themselves (as we have shown while refuting the fourth error), there is no room at all for such contention.

Here one may put forth a rational objection to this effect:- The needs and requirements of human life keep on changing with every age, and this has been the ground for the abrogation and supersession of every Shariah (divine legislation) prior to Islam. How can it, then, be possible that, on the one hand, during the mere six centuries that lie between Jesus Christ عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the needs and requirements of mankind underwent such a radical change that a new dispensation became necessary, but, on the other hand, during more than double the period which has passed since the days of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم up to our own day, those needs and requirements have not yet suffered the slightest change?

To this objection we would reply that if the Legislator is perfect in His wisdom and is also omniscient, it is quite possible for Him to frame, when He so wishes, a set of law which can fulfil the needs and requirements of all the successive ages extending up to the Day of Judgment.

Arguing from the conditions prevailing in the modern world, one may still raise a doubt, and say that one daily observes that if one tries to follow the Shariah, one has to face many obstructions in conducting the ordinary business of life, which only shows that

its injunctions are not suitable for this age. We would reply that the complaint about life becoming difficult can be justifiable only if all the people follow the Shariah, and yet the business of life should get obstructed. And this nobody can prove. The difficulties which one has to experience these days are due to the fact that those who do not follow the Shariah far outnumber those who do, and when this minority has to deal with that majority, a tension is sure to follow. Thus, the real source of the difficulties is our present way of life, and not the injunctions of the Shariah. It is just like a physician instructing a patient to eat ten different things, and the patient not being able to get any of these in his village. The impediment, in this case, lies not in the science of medicine, but in the condition of the village market.

As a matter of fact, no real difficulty arises at all in following the Shariah. It is only the fear of some personal loss that conjures up a suspicion that the Shariah is very restrictive and difficult to be practiced. But is there any system of law in existence which does not entail and tolerate individual loss for the sake of public good?

The sixth error is again related to the injunctions of the Shariah. Some people invent certain *raisons d'etre*. for these injunctions on the basis of their personal opinion, and insist on making the validity of the injunctions depend solely on the presence or absence of these very *raisons d'etre*. In consequence of this, they start misinterpreting, distorting and even annulling the injunctions laid down by the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. Thus, we have heard of some people who somehow convinced themselves that the *raison d'etre* of the ritual ablutions (*wudu'*) was no more than cleanliness, and, finding themselves clean enough, did not think it necessary to perform the ablutions at all before offering prayers. There have been others who

imagined that the *raison d'etre* of the ritual prayers was moral perfection, and, taking the attainment of this merit to be the desired end, gave up the daily prayers altogether. The same kind of encroachments have been made in the case of other forms of worship like fasting, *zakah* (ritual alms-giving) and the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the same way, the prohibitions in the Shariah too, like interest and pictures of living being etc., have been subjected to similar distortions. In short, such people have abrogated the Shariah totally.

A part from such a procedure being a patent heresy, the contentions put forth by such people are mere assertions unsupported by any rational argument. For, is it not rationally possible that a large number of these injunctions should be forms of worship and intended to develop devotion and piety in man, and that, in putting man under the obligation to obey these commandments, the real *raison d'etre* should be to test his fidelity and faith? Beside that, is there any argument to prove that the *raisons d'etre* which have been suggested by such people are the only possible ones? It is equally possible that the real *raisons d'etre* should be those effects which emanate from the generic form of a particular injunction, just as he efficacy of certain medicines (nay, of all medicines) emanates from their respective, specific virtues.

As far as the search for *raisons d'etre* in itself is concerned, it is quite possible that one man may hit upon one thing, and another upon a different thing. What would, then, be the rational criterion for preferring one opinion to another? According to the well-known rule that when two propositions contradict each other both of them are overthrown, we shall have to declare both of them to be invalid. Through this process of elimination, finally the injunctions of the

Shariah themselves would be demolished and annulled. This being so, would any sensible Muslim, who intended to remain faithful to his religion, choose to countenance such a procedure?

A corollary of the same error is that some people, in defending Islam against its detractors, try to justify the secondary injunctions of the Shariah by advancing similar rationalization and *raisons d'etre.*

Now, there is a great danger in adopting such a procedure. The *raisons d'etre* thus suggested are purely conjectural. If any of them is found to be questionable, the related injunction itself thereby becomes dubious and defective. Thus, it amounts to providing the detractors of Islam with a permanent opportunity for disputing and negating the Islamic injunctions.

The truth of the matter is that these injunctions are laws, and no one does ever seek secret motives in legal rules and regulations, nor does one have the right to change, or alter or abrogate laws on the ground of the imagined secret motives. It is the legislator himself who alone possesses these powers.

No doubt, the authentic and great Mujtahidun (or, the masters of Islamic law who enjoy sufficient authority to deduce subsidiary regulations from explicit injunctions) have, in the early centuries of Islamic history, sometimes pointed out the *raisons d'etre* of certain injunctions. But this example should not mislead one to appropriate this privilege to oneself. Those great masters had, firstly, to fulfil an essential need. That is to say, there are certain things about which there are no explicit decisions either in the Holy Qur'an or in the Hadith, and hence it was necessary to deduce regulations for such things from the explicit injunctions with regard to things of a similar

nature. Secondly, they had the requisite talent for making such deductions. But nowadays both the factors are absent. In the case of our modernists, besides the paucity of knowledge, the pursuit of one's desires is the thickest veil which conceals the truth from their eyes.

The seventh error, and the most fatal of all, is that some people are prepared to allow the possibility of salvation even to those who deny prophethood. Their contention is that the prophets themselves came for the purpose of affirming the unity of God, therefore, in so far as a man has attained the intended object, it does him no harm to deny something which was not intended to be the ultimate object.

A summary and traditional refutation of this opinion is provided by those verses of the Holy Qur'an and those pronouncements in the Hadith which explicitly state that those who deny prophethood shall be placed in hell for ever. And the rational refutation is that he who denies the prophet denies God, for, in doing so, he is denying God's word--that is, verses of the Holy Qur'an like:

محمد رسول الله

"Muhammad is the prophet of Allah". (48:29)

And a precedent from the worldly life is this. If a man were to acknowledge George V as his king, but were to keep defying the Viceroy of India, would his behaviour be considered meritorious or even pardonable by the king?

Intimation (4)

Regarding the Holy Qur'an, as one of the Four sources of the Shariah

It is an established fact that there are four sources of the Shariah:- (1) the Holy Qur'an, (2) the Hadith, or the Traditions of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, (3) Ijma-ul-Ummah, or the consensus of opinion on the part of the authentic scholars of the Islamic sciences, and (4) Qayas-ul-Mujtahid, or the inference made by a recognised master of Islamic law, who should fulfil certain definite conditions in order to enjoy such an authority. But nowadays people are committing grave errors with regard to each of these four sources in one way or another.

With regard to the Holy Qur'an, two errors have become quite common. Firstly, the injunctions of the Shariah are supposed to be contained exclusively in the Qur'an. The upshot of this error is the denial and rejection of the other three sources. Secondly, an attempt is make to bring the verses of the Holy Qur'an into conformity with the theories of modern science through fanciful interpretations, and also to prove that the Holy Qur'an propounds and confirms these very theories.

The first of these errors is clearly refuted by those verses of the Holy Qur'an and those traditions of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم which prove that the other three sources too must be accepted as valid and binding. This point has been discussed with all possible elaborations by the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence.

A corollary of the same error is that when a man desires to commit a certain sin and an attempt is made to keep him back from it, he at once demands that a clear prohibition for this particular sin should be shown in the Holy Qur'an. For example, one daily finds such demands being made in the newspapers with regard to the injunction about keeping a beard. This practice has become almost a second nature for modernized Muslims, so much so that whenever a detractor of Islam demands that the proof of a certain thing should be produced from the Holy Qur'an, they accede to this demand unquestioningly, and, taking their burden of proof upon themselves, go about in search of it. And when they cannot find it for themselves, they insist that the *Ulema* should somehow provide a proof from the Holy Qur'an.

But we have already established that the very basis of these corollary is wrong. So, it is quite evident that a proposition based on a false premise must also be false, and should not require a separate refutation.

Moreover, opening the door to this kind of argumentation would be an act of extreme recklessness, and betray a lock of foresight. The only things it can ultimately lead to is that one shall be forced to concede that the five "pillars" of Islam (that is, the principal forms of worship) themselves cannot be proved to have any basis in the Shariah. Can any one establish the prescribed number of *rak`ats* (sets of movement during the ritual prayer) for the five daily prayers on the basis of the Holy Qur'an, or determine as to who is required to who is required to pay the *zakah* (the ritual alms-giving) and how much ?

A concrete example would make the absurdity of this demand

all the more clear. Supposing that a plaintiff produces a witness in a court of law in support of his claim, the dependent would certainly have the legal right to cross-examine him. But if the witness comes out clean after such a cross-examination, the dependent would not have the further right of submitting before the court that, in spite of this witness being unblemished and trustworthy, he would not accept the claim until and unless such a dignitary or prominent person gives his evidence in its support instead of this man. If he were to make such a demand, would the court listen to him?

This is the real point behind the will-established rule of the art of polemics that one may justifiably demand an argument as such from one who makes an assertion, but not a particular kind of argument. It has also been clarified that the negation of the argument does not necessarily involve the negation of the subject matter of the argument (or of what is sought to be proved). Because an argument is the subsidiary while a subject is the principal, and the negation of what is subsidiary does not necessarily involve the negation of what is principal.

Therefore, a man who makes the claim that such an injunction has been established on the basis of the Shariah, has the right to prove his contention of the basis of any argument that he chooses from the Shariah. No one does have a justifiable right to challenge him, and to demand a particular kind of argument--for example, an argument based on the Holy Qur'an alone.

Of course, one must admit that the four kinds of arguments, drawn respectively from the four sources of the Shariah, vary in force of validity, even as the respective subjects of these arguments, or the injunctions that are sought to be proved, vary. Thus the injunctions are of four kinds:-

(1) Those which have been established on the basis of a definitive and conclusive argument, and also have a definite signification.

(2) Those which have been established on the basis of an approximative argument, and have an approximative signification.

(3) Those which have been established on the basis of a definitive argument, but have an approximative signification.

(4) Those which have been established on the basis of an approximative argument, but have a definite signification.

But, In spite of these variations in the degree of validity, no one has the authority to reject even approximative injunctions. Do we not see many a judge, against whose judgment no appeal can lie, often pronouncing his judgment on the mere ground that he has thought fit to apply to a case brought before him a certain section of the legal code,and though the section of the come is definitive, his decision that the particular case falls under that section is approximative? The substance of such a judgment would be that the particular section of the code has been established definitively, but its application is approximative--in other words, it reset on a definitive argument, but its signification is approximative. But every one can see for himself what the consequences would be if one were to question that judgment.

So much about the first error that is being committed with regard to the Holy Qur'an. The second error is the attempt ,make out as if the Holy Qur'an comprises the theories of modern science. Thus, one too often finds in newspapers and journals nowadays that as soon as people come across a scientific discovery made in the West, they try as best as they can to discover an indication of this

theory in some verse of the Holy Qur'an. This is supposed to be a great service to Islam, a matter of commendation for the Holy Qur'an, and a proof of one's own intelligence. What is worse, even some religious scholars have been found to be guilty of this error.

What is basically wrong with this approach is that it is supposed to be a mark of the highest perfection for the Holy Qur'an to contain scientific theories. The reason for this misconception is that no regard has been paid as to what the essential subject matter of the Holy Qur'an is.

The Holy Qur'an, in fact, is not a book of physical science, nor of history, nor of geography. It is a book which deals with the cure of souls, just as books on medicine deal with the cure of bodies. It would not be a defect or deficiency in a book on medicine, if it does not discuss the problems of shoe-making or cloth-wearing. Indeed, a slight reflection will show that in a way it would be a defect and imperfection for this book, if it were to discuss such problems unnecessarily, because it would only produce a confusion. On the other hand, not to discuss such things would be a merit of this book.

Similarly, it is not at all a defect or deficiency in the Holy Qur'an, which is essentially a book on spiritual medicine, that it does not discuss the problems of physical science. In fact, it is a merit of a kind.

However, if spiritual treatment should sometimes require that a problem of physical science too be discussed, such a discussion would be no more that a concession to this need. But, according to the established rule that what is necessary is determined by the extent of necessity, this discussion would not exceed the extent of necessity. For example, the affirmation of the unity of God is the

most fundamental principle in the science of curing souls. The easiest and simplest way of establishing this principle is to argue on the basis of the different forms of the creation while doing this, the Holy Qur'an has now and then dealt, very briefly, with themes like the creation of the heavens and the earth, of men and beasts, etc. Since the occasion did not require any details, they have been left out.

In short, it is not one of the main objects of the Holy Qur'an to deal with the problems of physical science. If any such problems have been touched upon, it is only by way of an argument or illustration in support of some of its basic themes. In so far as the Holy Qur'an has made an explicit and definite statement on a scientific problem, that statement is certain and finally true, and it is not permissible to believe in its opposite on the basis of some other argument. If there is an argument which seems to contradict the statement in the Holy Qur'an, one would, on careful examination, find that either the argument itself was defective, or the contradiction was not real but merely apparent. Of course, it is quite possible that the verse in question does not have a definitively explicit meaning, and that a valid argument can be found to prove the opposite of the apparent meaning. In such a case, the verse would not be taken in the literal sense, but given a secondary interpretation (as we have shown under Principle No. 7).

Let us now turn to another misunderstanding. We have shown above that it is not one of the basic objects of the Holy Qur'an to deal with scientific problems. Such problems find a mention merely as premises for proving the main proposition. And it is clear enough that when one is arguing to establish a certain proposition, the premises must be such as are, even before the proposition is affirmed, already acceptable to the audience, or are of the nature of

axioms, or have been made acceptable through proper argument; otherwise it would not be possible to employ them as valid arguments in favour of the proposition.

With this basic rule in mind, let us now try to realize that if the theories of modern science are what the verses of the Holy Qur'an are meant to indicate and to connote, and, as we know, the Arabs, who formed the earliest audience for the Holy Qur'an, were totally ignorant of these modern theories, then the only and the necessary conclusion would be that the Holy Qur'an has been arguing with them on the basis of certain premises which were neither universally acceptable, nor axiomatic, nor had yet been established through proof, and were ipso facto worthless as a basis for any valid argument. If one were to accept this situation, what a great blemish would it be on the word of God and its mode of argument!

The third great defect in this approach is that scientific theories are sometimes proved to be wrong. Now supposing that these theories are accepted to be the purport of the Holy Qur'an, and Muslims come to believe, according to this interpretation, that the Holy Qur'an has made such and such affirmations in such and such verses. If any one of these scientific theories is some day proved to be wrong, how easy would it be for the meanest detractor of Islam to deny the Holy Qur'an itself. For, he would say that such a statement in the Holy Qur'an is wrong, and since the demolition of a part necessarily implies the demolition of the whole, he would go on the assert that the Holy Qur'an itself is not true. How difficult would it then be to defend the Holy Qur'an?

One may possibly raise an objection here, and claim, as some have actually done, that it is a peculiar perfection of the Holy Qur'an that its words are found to be in consonance with whatever scientific

theories happen to enjoy currency in any age. If this is so, then it necessarily means that no connotation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an should at all be trustworthy, for every connotation would leave sufficient room for the possibility of its opposite being equally true. This strange claim reminds us of the well-known story of a clever astrologer. When a man came to ask him if he was going to have a son or a daughter, he would say in a flat tone --"No son no daughter". Later on, he would fit his words to the actual situation just by repeating them in different tones, and saying, "No son, no! ... Daughter", or, "No, Son!....no daughter". Would it be just to call such a book a source of guidance for mankind?

The fourth defect in this approach is that it totally goes against our self-respect, for if we make the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an dependent upon scientific upon scientific discoveries, would not the European scholars point out that although the Qur'an was revealed such a long time ago, yet no Muslim, not even the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم himself, has ever understood it, and that the Muslims should be grateful to the West for having made it possible for them to understand and interpret the Qur'an correctly? Were they to say so, what reply could we have?

So far we have dealt with the errors that are being committed with regard to the Holy Qur'an. Now, we turn to the other sources of the Shariah and to the errors that are committed regarding them.

Intimation (5)

Regarding the Hadith as one of the sources of the Shariah

The prevalent error with regard to the Hadith is that it is supposed that the traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are not authentic, and have not been handed down to us intact either as to their text or as to their substance. The texts are supposed to be of doubtful authenticity, because the traditions were not compiled in a written form during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself, but were reported orally from man to man, and a memory strong enough to retain the words exactly is something unnatural. The substance of the Traditions is similarly supposed to be doubtful, because every one who heard something from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم could perforce understand it only in his own way - which might be in accord with what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had really meant, or be even opposed to it---, and, being unable to retain the very words, reported to others only what he himself had understood, and thus even the substance could not remain intact. So, when neither the texts nor the contents are authentic, how can the Hadith serve as a valid authority? And this is the substance of the objection raised by the new-fangled set, the Qur'aniah, who believe the Holy Qur'an to be the only source of the Shariah.

In fact, this error results from disregarding the lives of the early *Muhaddithun* and the *Fuqaha* (the compilers of the Traditions and

the Muslim jurists). Some people have simply imagined them to be like themselves in the matter of a weak memory, a want of zeal, and a lack of piety. Their great power of memory is established by a large number of incidents reported about them, which one after the other bear out the same fact. For example, the companion Ibn Abbas heard a poem of one hundred couplets only once, and ever afterwards it was preserved in his memory; or, once in an assembly, one hundred Traditions were recited before the great master of the science of Hadith, Imam Bukhari, with the texts and them names of the authorities deliberately mixed up, and he pointed out the errors, corrected every one of the Traditions, and repeated the authentic versions of all the hundred Traditions word by word; or, another master of this science, Imam Tirmidhi, now blind, while passing by a certain spot, bowed his head as if he was passing under a tree, and, on being asked for the season, reported that there used to be a tree there (which was now missing), and the report was, on investigation, found to be quite true; or, the masters of the science of Hadith from time to time used to request their own masters to repeat the same Traditions in order to test their memory, and never found a word more nor less. All this is quite well-known, and has been narrated in biographic or histories or in the detailed catalogues of the reporters of the Traditions, and should suffice to establish the great power of memory these masters possessed. If one looks carefully into these catalogues, one would find that the Traditions reported by people with a weak memory have been excluded from the category of *Sahih* (or the most authentic) Traditions. This again is a sufficient proof of the scrupulous care that the masters of this science have taken in determining the authenticity of the Traditions.

Beside the power of memory, there is another factor as

well. Since Allah the Almighty had chosen these masters for this task, their faculty for remembering things had been strengthened with divine help. For example, a Hadith relates how the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recited a few words over the sheet of cloth which Hadrat Abu Hurairah was wearing, and the latter pressed it to his breast.

It would not proper to raise the objection here that we have just presented a Hadith in support of our argument, while the very validity of the Hadith as such is in dispute. As a matter of fact, all the Traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are not in dispute, but only those which have a bearing on the injunctions of the Shariah. The Tradition we have just referred to only relates an incident. Such Traditions fall into a category of the science of history, which is unanimously accepted as a valid standard of reference in an argument.

But if one were to object that this story goes against the law of nature, then we have already given our reply under Intimation No. 3, while discussing miracles. Moreover, we would even dispute the assertion that it goes against the law of nature. Mesmerists can so influence the imagination of their subject that unknown things become disclosed to him, and known things disappear or are obliterated. Far be it from us to suggest that the influence which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم exercised over Hadrat Abu Hurairah was of a similar kind. We only want to point out that it is not absolutely correct to consider this incident as something which goes against the law of nature. Even so, then it is a miracle, and we have already settled this issue. Beside, we have ourselves heard of people, quite close to our own day, who possessed an extraordinary memory. One such man was Hafiz Rahmatullah of Allahabad. We

have personally met people who had seen his performance for themselves, and have heard stories about him from them.

So much for the power of memory. Now as to the zeal of these masters for committing the Traditions to memory and for transmitting them intact, the incentive behind this zeal was that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has offered a special prayer for such a man:

نضر الله عبدا سمع مقالتى فحفظها ووعاها وأداها كما سمعها

"Man Allah grant happiness to the man who heard what I had said (i.e., Hadith), then committed to memory, preserved it intact, and transmitted it to another exactly as he had heard it". (Hadith).

So, those great masters made all possible efforts to be worthy of this prayer, and hence their anxiety to transmit the Traditions as exactly as possible. They had also a great dread of the least alteration, because they had heard this from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم :

من كذب على ما لم أقله فليتبوأ مقعده من النار

"The man who falsely imputes to me something which I have not said, should take it for granted that his resting place is hell". (Hadith).

Some of the companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stood in such a dread of it that they never related a Tradition at all. Then, the great masters of the science of Hadith so often, in the case of lengthy Traditions, used to qualify their report of the tradition by giving alternative words in the text or by saying, "This or something like this", etc. This is a clear proof of their scrupulousness

and of their anxiety to preserve the authenticity of even words. This being the case, one can see no harm if the Traditions were not compiled in a written form in the days of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself.

On careful consideration, one would, indeed, admit that this fact has been very helpful and efficacious in preserving the authenticity of the Traditions. For, so long as a man is habituated to write things down and has come to depend on memoranda, his memory does not come into full exercise, while every human faculty needs exercise in order to grow. We have often seen quite illiterate people working out lengthy sums orally. On the other hand, literate people can remember nothing unless they have written it down. This is one reason why people in our own day have such a weak memory. The other reason has been indicated above. That is to say, Allah the Almighty had given the early masters a very strong memory, for He had chosen them for the task of compiling the Traditions, and consequently compiling the injunctions of the Shariah on the basis of the Traditions. This task has already been completed for the most part, and what still remains to be done does not require a strong memory. And it is a law of nature ordained by God that certain human faculties are specially developed in consonance with the special needs of a certain age. For example, the development of the special mental faculty required for scientific discoveries and inventions in our own day too well illustrates the point.

If the Traditions were not written down in those early days, the *raison d'etre* was that the text of the Holy Qur'an should not get mixed up with that of the Hadith. Later on, when the text of the Holy Qur'an became established in full and final security, and that danger of confusion had been eliminated, and, moreover, when

different misguided sects began to appear, it then became necessary to compile the Traditions as a matter of precaution against misrepresentation and in order to fortify the faith. Thus, the Traditions began to be compiled with the greatest possible care. And if one makes a through examination of the texts of the Traditions, of the "chains" of the authorities, of the proofs of their authenticity, and of the catalogues of their names and their biographic, one cannot help being deeply convinced that the words and the deeds of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم have been preserved without the least change or alteration.

What we have been saying just now applies even to that category of the Traditions which is called *Ahad*— that is to say, a Tradition which has been reported by one or very few persons in any period. But if we take all the compilations of the Traditions together, and examine the texts along with the authorities, we shall find that the texts are often identical and the authorities many and diverse, which gives them the status of *mutawatir*. A Tradition of this category precludes the necessity of questioning the credibility of reporters, for a *mutawatir* Hadith (a Tradition that has been reported by many reporters in each generation in several consecutive chains) does not depend for its validity on the integrity, good memory or sound judgment of individual reporters.

Now that we have established how the Hadith is a final argument and a valid source for canonical law, it must also have become clear why it is wrong to criticize particular Traditions on the basis of *Darayat* (reason). For, the lowest degree of authentic Traditions is that in which the authenticity and the connotation both should be approximative, while the substance of what people nowadays call *Darayat* (reason) is only a rational argument of

conjectural nature. We have already shown under Principle No. 7 that an argument based on an approximative report is to be preferred to a rational argument of approximative nature.

As for the objection that, in the case of some Traditions, it is the sense alone which has been reported, and not the actual words, we agree that it has sometimes been so. But there are several considerations even here. Firstly, the companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not habitually resort to this practice unless there was a need for it, and, their power of memory being what it was, such a need arose only rarely. Secondly, the same Tradition has often been heard and reported by a number of companions. If one of them has reported only the sense, another has reported the actual words. When the purport of two such reports is found to be identical, it shows us that even those who have reported the sense alone, have understood the words quite correctly. In fact, the man who is scrupulous and has the fear of God, would take great care in trying to grasp the sense too, and would tremble with dread lest he should misinterpret it--he would to be satisfied unless he receives it without the slightest doubt or reservation. If it should sometimes happen--though it is rare enough--that the words have not been preserved at all, even then it is evident that a man who is close to the speaker and knows him intimately, can understand his speech in the light of the context, the situation, the tone and the accompanying gesture, as correctly as no one else ever can. On this basis, the insight of the Companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith must be as trustworthy as the understanding of them by others can never be.

This being so, how can it be proper on the part of the others to oppose them, to make uncalled for assertions supposedly on the

basis of the Holy Qur'an or one's own reasoning, and, taking these assertions to be the very dictates of reason, to reject a Hadith altogether as contrary to 'reason'? Can such a way of looking at things be at all worthy of our attention?

In view of these considerations, if there can at all be room for a doubt to arise, the doubt can at the most be effective with regard to the authoritative degree of certain traditions alone. In that case, the most that can happen is that such Traditions would not be considered fit for establishing finally authoritative injunctions on them. But even approximative injunctions are part and parcel of the Shariah, and it is obligatory to obey them. So, even the approximative nature of such injunctions would not be detrimental to their validity.

Intimation (6)

Regarding Ijma', or the Consensus of Opinion, as one of the sources of the Shariah

We are now left with *Ijma*, or the consensus of opinion on the part of the learned jurists of Islam, and *Qiyas*, or inference by analogy.

The usual error with regard to consensus is that it is not given a status higher than that of personal opinion, and hence it is not considered to be a valid ground for establishing an injunction as obligatory.

For one, this principle is derived from "sound report", and in this matter one has to depend on "report" (namely, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith). So, when we turn to the authority of "report", we find the following regulation:- If the *Ulema* of a particular age come to agree upon a particular issue, their opinion is binding, whether it pertains to beliefs or to actions, and, in the presence of such a consensus, to follow one's personal opinion is to be misguided. This "report" and the argument derived from it have been discussed in detail in the books on the basic principles of the Shariah.

Just as, when a book of law is accepted as authoritative, all its articles are equally obligatory; in the way, as the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith enjoy the position of final authority, all the laws laid down in them must be treated as obligatory. And one of these laws is that consensus is a definitive argument. So, this law too must be

obligatory, and a denial of this law must amount to an opposition of the divine and the prophetic code itself. This is evident enough.

Had this principle not been based on sound report, even then the law of our natural reason would have compelled us to admit that in our affairs we prefer the opinion of the majority to individual opinion, and consider the latter to have no weight as against the former. How can consensus which, being the agreement of all opinions, carries still more weight than the majority opinion, be placed on the same level as individual opinion, or be superseded by it?

Here a new objection may be raised to this effect–no doubt, individual opinion would not be able to hold its ground against consensus, but if we (of this age) come to agree upon something which is totally opposed to the consensus of the old masters, then our opinion can rightfully challenge consensus. The reply to this objection is that the agreement of every man is not valid in every sphere; the only agreement which can be valid in a particular sphere is that of its experts. So, if we honestly compare ourselves with the early masters in the matter of religious rectitude, we shall find a great decline in our own case, as to knowledge and practice both. Our standing in relation to them will turn out to be exactly the same as that of amateurs in relation to experts. Thus, our agreement as against theirs would have the same worth as the agreement of amateurs as against that of experts--that is to say, it would be as ineffective. Of course, if there is something about which nothing has been reported from the early masters, in that case the agreement of the *Ulema* of our own day too will be trustworthy.

Apart from all these arguments, there is behind this distinction a secret law of nature as God has ordained it. The habitual way of

Allah is that selfless and sincere work always receives divine help. While work motivated by personal desire does not. This fact being granted, we must try to understanding that if we possess, with regard to a certain matter, the consensus of the early masters--and it has already been established that such consensus enjoys final authority--there is no religious need for us to exercise our personal judgment in face of it. If one still indulges in it unnecessarily, the action cannot but be motivated by personal desire, and hence it cannot receive divine help. On the other hand, if we do not possess such consensus with regard to a certain matter, then a religious need for exercise of personal judgment does arise. To do something in order to fulfil a religious need is a sign of selflessness, and selfless work always receives divine help. Hence, such an argument would be trustworthy for having been aided by Allah Himself.

Let us make a necessary clarification at this stage. When we say that if we possess the consensus of the early masters with regard to a certain matter, the agreement of later *Ulema* cannot be trustworthy as against it, what we have in mind is only that kind of consensus which has been arrived at by the early masters on the basis of their own opinion. Let us add that even such an opinion must have had the sanction of the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith behind it, through no explicit and conclusive statement might be present in them.

On the other hand, if the consensus rests on the explicit connotation of a certain statement in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith, then any kind of opposition to this consensus would amount to an opposition to this explicit statement in the Holy Qur'an and the

Hadith themselves.

One might now ask: supposing that there exists an explicit statement in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith which contradicts a certain consensus based on another explicit statement, would it be permissible to go against the consensus which is in conformity with the latter? We would reply that even then it is not permissible. And we shall explain why. One explicit statement in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith has as much value and validity as another. But one of them has acquired an additional force through conformity with the consensus. Now, to act upon a weak argument when a stronger one is also available, is to go against reason as well as Tradition.

We would even add that an argument based on Tradition has already established that it is impossible for a matter which has been decided by consensus to be erroneous. So, if a statement in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith supporting a consensus is not evident to us, and, on the other hand, a statement is there to contradict it, even then this consensus would be given precedence on the assumption that those who had arrived at this consensus must have had before them some such statement which has not been cited by them. We say so on the following grounds. It is an error to oppose a statement in the Holy Qur'an or in the Hadith, and it is impossible for consensus to be erroneous. Hence it is impossible for this consensus to be opposed to such a statement. Therefore, the consensus must inevitably be in conformity with a statement. And the statement to which it on forms must be given precedence over another statement, because the former has been further strengthened by the consensus.

Consequently, even in this case, what has been given precedence over a statement in the Hadith is only another statement in the Hadith. And the relevant consensus is the sign and indication of the existence of the latter. In the Arabic terminology it is called *Al-Dali-al-inni.*

For example, consensus has forbidden the combining of two consecutive ritual prayers unless one is travelling or has a valid excuse. The Hadith which contradicts it can be found in Tirmidhi. In the same way, consensus has forbidden the call for prayers (*Adhan*) at the time of the false down, but a Hadith in Tirmidhi apparently contradicts it.

Intimation (7)

Regarding Qiyas or Inference by Analogy, as a source of the Shariah

Having considered the three principles, we now have to deal only with *Qiyas*, or Inference by Analogy. The errors usually committed in this respect are quite a few.

The first of these errors pertains to the meaning and nature of Inference by Analogy. In substance, this principle is applicable only to a situation about which there is no explicit injunction either in the Holy Qur'an or in the Hadith, nor is there a consensus on the subject. But, evidently enough, there is no situation of this world or of the other that the Shariah could have neglected, and for which it should not have laid down an injunction __ as we have shown under Intimation No. 3 while discussing the fourth error. So, even in the case of those situations for which we do not find an explicit, injunction, one would rather say that the Shariah has laid down an injunction for this situation too, but, since it has not been formulated in express and explicit terms, the relevant injunction is present in a veiled form. Thus, one will be required to deduce or infer this veiled injunction in some way.

The mode of this deduction too has been pointed out by certain indications in the Shariah. And it is this in dealing with a situation about which the Shariah is apparently silent, one should firstly consider those situations about which about explicit injunctions have been laid down in the Holy Qur'an or the Hadith in order to

find out which one of them has the nearest resemblance with or similarity to the situation under investigation with regard to its peculiarities and characteristics. Secondly, one should try to determine, in the case of the situation for which there is an explicit injunction the peculiarity or characteristic which forms the most probable basis for this injunction. Thirdly, one should ascertain whether this very peculiarity is present in the case of that situation too about which the Shariah appears to be silent. Finally, if it is found to be present, the same injunction will be held to apply to this situation also as has been explicit laid down for the other situation also as has been explicit laid down for the other situation analogous to this one.

Thus, the process of Inference by Analogy has to pass through four stages, and there are technical names for the different factors involved in it. The situation for which there is an explicit and regular injunction in the Shariah is called *Maqees alaih* (that on which the analogy is based), while the situation about which the Shariah appears to be silent is *Maqees* (the analogue).

The basis of the injunction is *Ilat* (The basis of the analogue) and the final affirmation of this injunction for the situation about which the Shariah appears to be silent, is called *Ta`diyah* (extension) or *Qiyas* (Inference by Analogy).

This, then, is the real meaning and nature of Inference by Analogy, which the Shariah has sanctioned as has been amply shown by the writers on the basic principles of the Shariah.

Therefore, one must admit that even when an injunction has been established through Inference by Analogy, the real and ultimate sanction behind it is the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, and

the Inference by Analogy does no more than make the injunction manifest.

Now, as against this genuine Inference by Analogy, what is nowadays called *Qiyas* by Muslim modernists, and actually practised by them, is something totally different. The substance of the new-fangled *Qiyas* is no more that individual and personal opinion, pure and simple, in which injunctions are not deduced from the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith in conformity with the procedure described above. Even they themselves admit this fact, for they are too fond of using phrases like "in our opinion" and "we think" This, in fact amounts to setting oneself up as a legislator laying down the Shariah. The defect of this approach is evident even from the rational point of view. Individual opinion has also been condemned by the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith and the early masters. This shows the falsity of this approach from the traditional point of view. Thus, it is condemnable rationally as well as traditionally.

The second error pertains to the occasion when the principle of Inference by analogy can be validly employed. The above discussion has made it clear that the need for Inference arises only in those situations about which there is no explicit injunction in the Shariah, and that, in order to extend the application of a certain injunction intended for one situation to an analogons situation, one has to find out the *raison d`etre* of this injunction. It follows from this that, unless there is an actual need for such an extension and inference, it is not permissible to seek to determine the *raison d`etre* of an explicit injunction. The great error which is so often being committed nowadays is that people try to impute some kind of a *raison d`etre* even to an explicit injunction without there being any need for it, and then venture to make the very existence or non-existence

of this injunction depend on the existence or non-existence of this *raison d'etre* which they imagine to have discovered---as we have already shown under Intimation No. 3, while discussing the sixth error.

The second error with regard to inference helps us to understand the nature of the third error too, which pertains to the purpose of Inference. As we have juxt explained, the essential purpose of Inference is to extend and apply a certain injunction to a certain situation for which no injunction is to be found in the Shariah explicity, and not to alter or distort one which has been explicity laid down.

The fourth error pertains to the question as to who enjoys the authority to meke an Inference. The modernists consider every one to be worthy of this right.Some bold spirits have propounded, in their public lectures, that the verse:

> "your religion is for yourselves, and my religion is for myself".(109:6)

has bestowed the right of drawing an inference in religious matters (*Ijtihad* upon each and every one. As a matter of fact, the masters of the science of the basic principles of the Shariah have, with strong arguments, already laid down the qualifications necessary for the man who can be allowed the right to draw an inference for himself in religious matters (*Ijtihad*). This shows that it can never be a common or general right. Moreover, this particular verse of the Holy Qur'an does not at all mean what the modernists suppose it to mean. Then, it dose not require a bery fine intelligence to be able to see that every one cannot be worthy of this right. The substance of

what we have said above about the nature of *Qiyas* and *Ijtihad* in comparable to lawyer applying a certain section of the legal code to a particular case. If every one were equally competent to do it, where would be the need for studying law and getting a degree ? Just as, in the latter case, certain conditions must be fulfilled---the man should have studied law, he should still know and remember what he had once studied, he should have understood the aims and objects of different laws, and he should have an insight into the intricacies of the cases he is dealing with before he can be regarded as qualified to advise that the case falls under such and such section of the legal code; in the same way, similar conditions must be fulfilled in the matter of exercising *Ijtihad* also.

Now, it is a different matter whether a man with the qualifications necessary for *Ijtihad* can be found in our own day. This is a subject of controversy between two Muslim sects --- on the one hand are those who hold that it is necessary to conform to the decisions of the established masters of *fiqh* or Islamic law, and on the other hand are those who do not think so. It would be quite out of place for us to discuss the question at length, for we are here concerned only with those errors into which Muslim modernists have generally fallen. So, we would say only a few words on the subject. Supposing that a man with such qualifications can still be found, even then it is better to be on the safe side, and not to rely on one's own *Ijtihad* or *Qiyas*, for we who belong to the present age temperamentally ten to follow our own desires and to seek lame excues even in religious matters. If we begin to exercise the right of *Ijtihad*, it is almost certain that our minds will always be inclined towards that decision which suits our desires. Morever, we would thus be providing an example to those who are totally unworthy of this privilege. Such people would use the precedent set by us as a

pretext for apropriating the right of *Ijtihad* to themselves. And this would finally lead to a diminishing of piety, fear of God and scrupulousness in religious matters.

Let us take an example from every day life. Once the they have been assumed to be the most qualified to judges of a high court have declared their judgment in a case, no one, not even a subordinate judge, is allowed to interpret the particular section of the legal code in a different way, and the basis of this injunction is that they have been assumed to be the most qualified to interpret the law. Were we to allow every one to go against the judges, every one would act in his own way, and end up by destroying law and order in the country. We should try to see that exactly the same principle holds good with regard to the established masters of Islamic law.

Now, let us finally sum up the essential substance of all the errors regarding the fourfold sources of the Shariah:-

(1) The modernists accept the Holy Qur'an as the final authority. They also accept its authencity. But they commit errors in interpreting it.

(2) They accept the Hadith as an authority, but question its authenticity, and do not thus touch upon the question of interpreting it.

(3) They refuse altogether to accept *Ijma'*, or consensus, as an authority.

(4) In place of Qiyas, or Inference by Analogy, they have substituted an invention of their own, which they take to be the final criterion for judging the validity of an injunction. And the Principle they have invented is personal opinion.

Intimation (8)

Regarding the Reality of the angels, the Jinns and Satan

The modernists deny to the angels and the Jinns that kind of existence which has been affirmed by the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith and the consensus, sometimes on the ground that if such substances did really exist, they must have been apprehensible through the senses, and sometimes on the ground that one cannot understand the nature of the existence of a thing which is supposed to pass before our eyes and yet remain unperceived. This, then, is the reason of their denial. But the Holy Qur'an categorically affirms the existence of the angels and the Jinns in several verses, and a Muslim cannot question the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an. So, the modernists have recourse to such farfetched interpretations and rationalizations as amount to a clear distortion of the sense of those verses.

As to the grounds on which the explicit meanings of these verses are denied, we have already shown, under Principle No.4, why they are erroneous. This is our exhaustive reply to the objection.

And now let us reply by a counter-charge. The philosophers believe that matter, before being invested with the existing forms, was in a subtle state which is described as nebulous or ethereal. Now, that is substance too, but no one ever observed it. Moreover, its peculiar state and quality cannot be understood clearly except in vague imaginary manner. That is why some except in a vague

imaginary manner. That is why some of the Greeks have even denied its existence. Yet they assume its existence, simply because their argument required such an assumption, although this assumption is not itself founded upon any argument at all--as we have shown under Intimation No.1.

Thus when, there is no rational argument to prove the impossibility of substances like the angels and the Jinns, their existence must be posited as rationally possible. And when a thing is rationally possible and there is at the same time an argument based on sound report to establish its existence, it becomes rationally necessary to affirm its existence (vide Principle No. 2). Moreover, it is the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith which report the existence of the angels and the Jinns. So, it is doubly necessary and obligatory to affirm the existence of such substances.

And since the fundamental principle with regard to the interpretation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is that they have to be taken, above all, in the literal and explicit sense, so it is erroneous to indulge in farfetched interpretations. When a rational argument enjoys only the approximative degree of validity (vide Principle No.7). What then, can be the value of the idle fancies of these modernists?

Some of the modernists have raised certain other objections in this regard, which have been mentioned in Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's commentary on the Holy Qur'an. Those who are interested in the subject, may see the replies in the book *Alburhan*.

Intimation (9)

Regarding the events in the Grave, the Realities of the other World, Heaven, Hell, the Bridge of Sirat, the Balance, etc.

The modernists reject the explicit significations of all these things on the very same ground on which their denial of the actuality of the angels and the Jinns is based. Since we have already demonstrated, under Intimation (8), how weak these grounds are, it also goes to show the nullity of such a rejection.

Some people have raised other objections too. But quite a few of these are to be found even in the writings of the old *Mu'tazilah* school, and have already been conclusively refuted in the books of *I'lm-ul-Kalam*, while others are nowadays being presented in a some what new form. But all of them can be summarised like this :--when the soul of a dead man lying in the grave is no longer present in his body, how can he be conscious of pain or pleasure? How can he hear the questions of the interrogating angels without possessing the sense of hearing, and make a reply without possessing the faculty of speech? Where are Heaven and Hell located? if they are really as vast as they are reported to be, which space can accommodate then? If the Bridge of Sirat is so narrow, how can one possibly walk on it ? Human deeds not being physical bodies, how would they be placed in the Balance?

The single reply to all these questions is this. The essence of all

these objections is improbability, but what is improbable is not necessarily impossible(vide Principle No.3). Impossibility having been discounted, all these things become rationally possible. Now, trustworthy report -namely,the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith-- affirms that they are real and actual. Hence, it is necessary to accept them as real and actual (vide Principle No.2).

We shall now provide specific replies to the different questions individually.

It is quite possible that the human body in the grave should possess so much of soul as to be conscious of pain and pleasure, but not affected by the stimuli of this world nor be moved by those of the intermediary world. For instance, a man once reported his experience to me. He was being treated for the retention of urine, and had been anaesthetised. As the catheter was inserted, he did not feel any pain whatsoever, but he did experience uneasiness on account of a sort of suffocation,and was unable to move. Alternatively, it is also possible that the pain or the pleasure is not experienced by the body in the grave but by the soul in the abode where it happens to reside. As to where the soul does reside, it is possible that this abode lies in some part of the vaster space, and that this may be the sphere known as "the world of spirits". This possibility disposes of the objection as to how a body can be tortured if it has been burnt or eaten up by a beast.

As to how one can hear without ears or speak without a tongue, we would firstly say that these organs are not rationally necessary for the act of perception, but only the habitual conditions. The two categories have distinct characteristics (vide Principle No. 3). It is just possible that what is habitual for that world is different from what is habitual for this one. Secondly, it is equally possible that in

the world beyond the grave the soul receives a different kind of body which is appropriate to that world, and which has similar organs of perception. In fact, certain "men of mystic vision" (*ahl-al-Kashf*) do believe in such a state, and call it "the subtle body" (*al-jism-al-mithali*).

As for the location of Heaven and Hell, it is possible that they lie somewhere in the vaster space, which is supposed to be unlimited by modern thinkers. Crossing the bridge of *Sirat* might well appear to be improbable with regard to our present situation, but id does not make it necessarily impossible (vide Principle No. 3).

The weighing of human deeds in the balance too is possible in the following manner. Every human deed is recorded in books, and these are bodies, according to the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. So, it is possible that every meritorious deed is written down in a particular part of the book, and as the number of such parts increases, the weight too would undoubtedly increase. Moreover, it is possible that some of these parts may in spite of the equivalence in mass, differ in lightness or heaviness on account of accidental qualities like sincerity etc. For example, we find heat and cold make a difference in the weight of bodies which are equivalent in mass and nature. This might be the case with evil deeds too. Thus, these books would be weighed in the balance, and the differences in the weights would, no doubt, reveal the differences amongst the deeds. Even the traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم suggest that this probability is closer to the truth, for the terms like *bitaqah* (piece of paper) and *sijillat* (scrolls)are explicit enough. Thus, we see that the weighing of scroll is something real and actual, but it has metaphorically been attributed to deeds. So where is the harm

if things happen on the same pattern even in the other world?

The objection with regard to the ability of the bodily organs to speak is of the same nature. It is merely a habitual improbability, and not a rational impossibility. In fact, since the appearance of the gramophone there is little justification left for describing the ability of the bodily organs to speak even as improbable.

Intimation(10)

Regarding certain Features of the Physical Universe.

As we have already explained in our introductory remarks, it is not one of the basic objects of the sacred Shariah to discuss the physical universe, but the Shariah has touched upon certain topics of this nature in a subsidiary manner as an aid to the attainment of its own proper object. So, it is not necessary for us to investigate fully into the nature and properties of the universe, for such an enquiry has little to do with the basic purpose of the Shariah. All the same, to whatever extent and in whatever way, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith have said something on the subject,it is not permissible to affirm or to believe in what is opposed to such statements. Since these statements occur in the "truthful utterance" to affirm the opposite amounts to denying the ''truthful utterance''. Hence, we must consider it rationally incumbent upon us to deny and to reject all such beliefs or propositions as are contrary to the statements in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith.

It would not be out of place to mention a few of such cases by way of example to serve as a pattern. The first among these is the explicit statement in the Holy Qur'an and the Hidith that man is born out of human seed. Now, to posit, on the basis of the theory of evolution, that a beast has by stages developed into the present form of men, as Darwin has fancied, would certainly be false. For the statements in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith explicitly go against

such a hypothesis, and there is no rational argument which should contradict these statements. Neither does Darwin possess such an argument, for he himself has confessed that he has produced a theory as a result of his own speculations;nor do his followers from among the Muslims, for their own statements show that they affirm this theory only in imitation of Darwin. In fact, if one reflects a little, one would find that even their imitation of Darwin is imperfect, both in respect of the motivating cause and in respect of particular detail. In respect of the motivating cause, for what impelled Darwin to affirm such a ridiculous hypothesis was the fact that, being a materialist and an unbeliever, he could not have faith in religion, and had to invent the cult of evolution. Thus it became necessary for him to ascribe some physical cause or condition to the appearance of everything, and hence he posited this probability with regard to the birth of man. But as for these who believe in the existence of the Creator--that is to say, people belonging to different religions, and specially Muslims, they have no need for any cult of evolution at all; profession of faith in Divine Creation is sufficient for them; they can easily affirm that man was created by God, and that he was created in the present form. Then, why should they need to posit such a ridiculous proposition? This goes to show that Muslims are not in agreement in denial of the Creator which compelled Darwin to proceed in this manner. That is why we say that modernist Muslims are not really following him with regard to the very *raison d'etre* of the theory of evolution.

In respect of particular details too, their imitation of Darwin is imperfect. Darwin does, no doubt,posit that a species of beast evolved by stages into man, but he does not affirm it in the case of a single individual, nor does he have any natural need to make such an affirmation. On the contrary, he posits that in the course of

evolution when beastly nature acquired the potentiality to become man, a large number of individuals belonging to the same beastly species turned into the human species all at time. But Muslim, so long as they are Muslims, cannot accept such a hypothesis, for the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith explicitly state that the first man was a single individual. So, they cannot be in agreement with Darwin even in respect of this particular detail. We might remark that in our days certain insolent, unscrupulous and impudent people have had the temerity to suggest that Adam is the name of the ape which first turned into man. May Allah protect us from such things! Apart from the obvious impertinence of this suggestion, the pity is that such people have, in spite of their insolence, failed to attain the merit of being in perfect agreement with Darwin. They are neither here or there.

Among similar cases is the production of rain, lighting and thunder. The manner in which they are produced is mentioned in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. It is not permissible to deny it merely on the ground that people have, with the help of certain instruments, observed them being produced in a different manner. We call it impermissible, because had there been a contradiction between the two, then, of course, the affirmation of the manner to which our observation compelled us must have necessarily entailed the denial of the other. But there is no argument to show that there is a contradiction. It is quite possible that rain etc. Are produced sometimes by one set of causes, and sometime by another. Nor do the Traditions claim to lay down a general affirmative proposition that admits of no exception or alternative. And as for observation it can never yield a law of this kind. Thus, in both the places we obtain merely partial propositions, or neutral

ones which have the force of a partial proposition. And it is a well-known and accepted principle of logic that there can be no contradiction between two partial propositions. Hence, there being no contradiction between the two partial proposition, it is possible to accept both at the same time. Where, then, is the need to deny the Traditions ?

Similar is the case of the causes of plague which the traditions ascribe to sins or to the pricking by Jinns. Even this statement does not come into contradiction with the observation which shows plague to be caused by a particular kind of germs. The explanation we have just given would hold good even here.

Similarly, there is the traditional belief that diseases are not contagious, which people nowadays deny on the ground of experimentation. If one reflects a little, one would see that even here there is no contradiction, for the rejection of the idea of contagion may mean that contagion is not something so necessary that it must always occur without fail and is an effective agent in itself without the sanction of the Creator. Observation does not establish the existence of such a contagion. Conversely,observation shows us that sometimes contagion does not take place. On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith expressly lay down that every thing depends on the will of God.

Another case is the plurality of the earths, which has been specifically mentioned in the Traditions. It is not permissible to deny it merely on the ground that such a thing has not yet been discovered through observation, for the non-existence of observation does not necessarily imply the observation of non-existence, and in this case one can advance only the latter as an argument, not the former. Now, one may raise the objection that, according to the

Traditions, the other earths lie under our earth, but one had gone round the globe in all directions without finding any trace of them. To this we would reply that those earths possibly somewhere in the vaster space so far away from our earth that one cannot see them. Or that they appear to be so small that we take them to be stars. As for their being underneath our earth, it may be so only with regard to certain situations and certain occasions, otherwise, with a change in the respective positions, they may sometimes be above the earth and sometimes underneath.

Still another case is the existence of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* (Gog and Magog). Here too one advance the lack of observation as an argument. But, as we have seen above, it is not a valid argument. It is possible that they reside near the pole which has not yet been discovered, or in some big island which has not yet been explored.

Similar is the case of the belief that the heavens are plural in number, and have a hard body. Here too we refer back to principle that the lack of observation is not a valid argument.

Another case in the motion of certain planets, like the sun and the moon to which the Holy Qur'an ascribes movement. Such motion has explicity been attributed to them as being real and not as a mere visual illusion. In saying so we mean to deny that the sun is in a state of rest, and not to deny the motion of the earth. As for the latter, the Shariah has not discussed the matter at all, either affirmatively or negatively. It is just possible that both of them possess a certain kind of motion, peculiar to each, and that the combination of the two kinds of motion produces the configurations which we observe.

There is also the case of such an alteration in the present system

of the Solar movement that on doomesday it will dawn in the west instead of in the east. The mere fact that this system has always been observed to function in the present manner cannot serve as an argument to prove the impossibility of any change, as has sufficiently been demonstrated in rational sciences. It is self-evident that what is perpetual is not therefore necessary. Now, should one raise the objection that such an alteration goes against the law of Nature, we have already clarified the point under Intimation No. 2.

Then, there is the case of the possibility of the human body being elevated to a region which does not contain any air. Nowadays people deny it merely on the ground that it is not natural for man to remain alive in such a place. And, as a corollary, follows the denial of the bodily Ascension of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم or *Miraj*. In as much as it is supposed to go against the law of nature, one may see the reply to this objection under Intimation No. 2. Moreover, if one extends the rational probability a little, one need not call it even unnatural. For, it is not habitual for a man to remain alive in such a region only when he stays there for a considerable time, but if he passes through it with a swift movement like that of lightning, it would not be unnatural for him to remain alive in such a region. We daily observe that if we keep our finger in the fire for some time, it gets burnt, but if we move it in and out of fire swiftly, it remains unscathed, in spite of having entered it. In the same way, if the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم during his Ascension is believed to have been carried swiftly across the airless region to a higher one where air or some other element with similar properties existed in the space or sky, would that really be inadmissible?

Intimation (11)

Regarding the question of Destiny

This question ultimately leads us back to Divine knowledge and the power of Divine will. Any one who believes in God and in the perfection of His attributes must also necessarily believe in Destiny. But nowadays several grave errors are being committed on this subject. There are some who flatly deny it, and the basis of this denial is their apprehension that the affirmation of Destiny entails the repudiation of human freedom, and that the abrogation of human will produces demoralization and degeneration. In fact, this apprehension itself is false. If some one with a distorted mind comes to regard human will as wanting in reality and efficacy, the fault does not lie in the belief in Destiny. For, the Holy Qur'an and Hadith have nowhere denied the reality of human freedom. On the contrary, there are numerous explicit statements in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith which encourage human effort and struggle, and induce men to work for their livelihood, to carry provisions in their journey, and to take steps in order to defend oneself against harm or against the machinations of the *foe*. The difficulty as to whether medicine or prayer can ward off one's destiny has been solved in certain traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in a wonderfully succinct and satisfying manner in the following words:

ذلك من القدر كله

"One's act of praying and using medicine is also a part of one's destiny".

There are still other modernist Muslims who have not, in view of the explicit statements in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith ventured to deny Destiny, but, apprehending that this belief would necessarily imply that man has no freedom of will and choice, which goes against one's observation, they have given the belief a new interpretation. Destiny, they say, is another name for Divine knowledge, and, since the knowledge of a fact does not determine the fact, the relationship between destiny and human action does not necessarily raise the difficulty mentioned above. To illustrate their meaning, they cite the case of the astrologer who can foresee and foretell future events;thus, if he foretells that such a man would get drowned in a well on such a date, and it actually turns out to be like that, we would not say that the man has been murdered by the astrologer. But one who is familiar with the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith may very well raise an objection here, and it would be a rational proposition too. Just as there is no event which should be unrelated to Divine knowledge, in the same way there is no event which should be unrelated to Divine Will, and this is the essential nature of Destiny. Even if a man does not choose to call it Destiny, he cannot deny the relationship between Divine Will and events. So, how does the modernist interpretation of Destiny help in avoiding the difficulty?

As a matter of fact, the very proposition that the impossibility of everything going against Divine Will necessarily negates the freedom of human choice, is in itself wrong. We may now offer two refutations of this proposition, one negative and other positive. The negative reply is that if the impossibility of anything going against Divine Will negates the freedom of choice, and since Divine Will is evidently related even to Divine Acts themselves, it follows

necessarily that God Himself should have no freedom of choice in the matter of His own acts. But no sane person can accept such a proposition. And the positive reply, which is really the heart of the matter, is that the will of the Creator is related to the acts of the creatures not merely with regard to their actualization, but also with a certain condition attached thereto, the condition being actualization according to their choice. Thus, when the relationship between Divine Will and human choice with which it is related makes the latter a necessary entity, the belief in Destiny, far from negating human freedom, affirms and emphasizes it. This is so evident that one need not expatiate upon it.

As for the objection that one too often observes that those who believe in Destiny suspend all activity and just sit idle and helpless, we would reply that this is the consequence of their indolence, and not of the belief.Had this been the logical result of this belief, the companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would have been the idlest of all people. In fact, a little reflection would show that the natural consequence of this belief is that one is encouraged to start one's effort, even when one's own plan or power seems to be very feeble. For instance, the companions looked towards Allah in all circumstances, and could hence take the greatest risks fearlessly in spite of having no material means, for the resigned themselves to the Will of Allah. This is the very theme of the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللهِ

"How often has a small group of people overcome a large one with the permission of Allah".(2,249)

And a Tradition tells the following story in detail. A man

brought his case for judgment before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم Having lost the case, he said:--

حسبى الله ونعم الوكيل

> "Allah is sufficient for me, and He is the most excellent guardian". Hearing this , the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم remarked:-
>
> إن الله يلوم على العجز فإذا غلبك أمر فقل حسبى الله ونعم الوكيل
>
> "Allah certainly reproaches a man for an attitude of abject passivity. It is only when you feel overpowered by some thing, say then: Allah is sufficient for me, and He is the most excellent guardian".

The consequence which necessarily follows upon the belief in Destiny is that one who believes in it would not consider his own device to be really efficacious. And this is the conclusion to which sound rational argument must lead and which is also supported by an argument based on sound report. Then, how can it be a matter for reproach? On the contrary, the man who really deserves to be reproached is he who believes in the opposite. The man who believes in Destiny would consider human effort to be just as efficacious as a red flag is in stopping a train, which act is neither totally ineffective nor really efficacious by itself. The watchman who wants to stop a train at the time of danger would certainly adopt the device of waving the red flog, but he would all the time be looking towards the engine driver or the guard, relying on them and not on his own effort. As a Persian poet says:

> "The scattering of musk—like fragrance is really the function of they locks. But the lovers, as matter of policy, impute it to the musk---deers of China".

One last question remains to be answered. When the belief in Destiny can be firmly established on the basis of rational argument and Tradition both, then why is all investigation into this matter said to be prohibited by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ? The reason for this prohibition is that certain doubts are not rational but natural. Mere rational argument is not always sufficient in order to cure a man of such doubts. What is required in this case is that the intuitive faculty should be sound. Since people with a sound intuitive faculty are very few, any investigation into the problem of Destiny is quite likely to intensify such doubts, which would be disastrous for the life of this world and of that world both. So, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم , in his wisdom and benevolence, thought fit to prohibit this kind of enquiry, just as a kind-hearted physician prohibits a weak patient to take strong food.

Intimation (12)

Regarding the "Pillars of Islam" and the Modes of Worship

Some people are nowadays committing a great error with regard to the "Pillars of Islam" and the modes of worship. They do not consider these injunctions to be ends in themselves, but try, on the basis of personal opinion, to discover some *raison d'etre* for each one of them, and take these *raisons d'etre* to be the proper end. If these latter ends can be attained in some other way, they would not consider the respective injunctions to be at all necessary. For example, the *raison d'etre* for ritual prayer is supposed to be moral discipline; that for ritual ablution mere cleanliness; that for fasting, control over animal energy; that for ritual alms-giving (*Zakat*), helping those who do not possess the means of "progress", that for the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*), collective gathering for the furtherance of trade, commerce, culture and for encouraging " progress", that for the recitation of the Holy Qur'an mere information and acquaintance with the contents of the book; that for devotional prayer,only the satisfaction of the soul; that for openly declaring the word of Allah, mere peace and freedom. These *raisons d'etre* having been assumed, when one finds that they are no longer required or can be attained in other ways, one summarily proceeds to declare the respective injunctions to be meaningless or futile. As soon as one's natural instincts get this much concession, one does to even care for these supposed objectives, and gives up religious practices altogether and sits ideal.

As a matter of act, we have already refuted this misconception in detail under Intimation No. 3, while dealing with the sixth error, but we had to refer to it again, for the occasion required it.

Another error that one may really commit in this regard is to seek to modify and alter the injunctions according to one's own opinion. For instance, certain people have nowadays been suggesting changes in the injunction with regard to animal sacrifice. They say that the real object behind this injunction was to make people spend in the way of God, and, cattle being the wealth in those days, animal sacrifice was the proper mode of attaining this object, but money is now in general demand, and hence the mode of sacrifice should be changed.

Moreover,if one goes on like that, there would be no end to this search for *raisons d'etre*. Could any one assign a *raison d'etre* to the number of *raka'ts* in each one of the daily prayers? If human reason alone had been sufficient in these matters, there was no need for the prophets to come, for the world has always had enough thinkers and philosophers in every age. To tell the truth, the invention of such *raisons d'etre*, all of which really pertain to worldly good, is an implicit denial of the good of the other world. If the other world does actually exist, evidently it must be a different kind of world. It is even rationally possible that just as one geographical zone differs from another in its properties and as Mars differs from our earth, in the same way the properties of that world may be totally unrelated to those of this world, and that we have no knowledge as to what those properties are, and consequently the attainment of the good of the other world may depend on specific kinds of actions about whose correspondence and relationship to the good we can have knowledge.

Beside that, if a man were to deal with the laws promulgated by the worldly rulers in the same way and start inventing aims and objects for every law, and having attained those objects through an easier method, refuse to obey the laws of the land, every one can see for himself what would happen to such a man at the hands of the government. To take a common example, let us suppose that a man is summoned by a court of law to appear as a witness. He acknowledges the summons,but does not appear in the court on the due date on the plea that the object of his presence is the recording of his evidence, and this object can be attained in a simpler manner by his sending his evidence in a registered letter to the judge who, fortunately, recognizes his signature. Would this man not deserve to be dealt with according to the warning contained in the summons that if he fails to present himself before the court on the due date, a warrant will be issued against him? Or to take another example, if a man changes the usual mode of greeting people, and presents to them a piece of paper with the necessary words written on it, would this new mode be acceptable to them?

Let no one misinterpret this discussion, and conclude that, according to us, the injunction of the Shariah are totally devoid of all *raisons d'etre* and subtleties of this kind, or that the sages of Islam have no Knowledge of such subtleties. *Raisons d'etre* and subtleties are, no doubt, present, and a certain degree of illumination with regard to them has been gained in the past, and can be gained even now. All the same, the carrying out of injunctions of the Shariah does not at all depend on gaining such knowledge. When if one does not possess any knowledge of the *raisons d'etre*, it is absolutely necessary to obey the injunctions of the Shariah. It is just like the case of the legal statutes of the state if a man waits for the aims and objects to be explained before he obeys a law, he would

be committing a great crime. Even so, if the *Ulema* do sometimes explain such subtleties, that is a mere concession and an act of generosity on their part. Moreover, the degree of Knowledge that has been gained in this respect is no more than approximative and conjectural. In fact, no knowledge has at all been gained with regard to the *raisons d'etre* of certain injunctions. And it is no wonder that things should be like this. We see in our daily life that the servant in a household does not know why certain things have been arranged in a certain manner, although the master too is a creature of God like the servant. When one creature cannot know the secrets of another creature in spite of both differing in their respective degrees of knowledge within a very limited range, then what wonder if the creature should have no knowledge at all of the secrets of the Creator, or if such a knowledge should not be exact, when the difference between the knowledge of the Creator and that of the creature is immeasurable? In fact, a philosopher has even remarked that if a full rational justification for all the injunctions could be discovered, it would only serve to raise the doubt that perhaps the religion concerned had been invented by an exceptionally intelligent individual or group of individuals, for other rational and intelligent, persons also have succeeded in fathoming the reasons for the injunctions. The peculiarity of a Divinely ordained religion should be that no one can fully or perfectly get to the bottom of its subtle secrets.

Nor should this discussion lead one to think that the injunctions for which we cannot find a rational justification are contrary to reason. Not at all. Being contrary to reason, is one thing, and one's inability to understand through reason is another. (See Principle No. 1).

Intimation (13)

Regarding Mutual Transactions (*Mu'amalat*) and Politics (*Siyasiyyat*)

It is a common error nowadays that mutual transactions and politics are not supposed to be a part of religion and of the Shariah. Taking them to be merely social matters, people make them dependent upon personal opinion and the exigencies of the age, and believe themselves free to act as they like in these things. It is on this ground that they are anxious to justify even usury and interest, and coax the *Ulema* to accept this opinion, and when the latter refuse to do so, they get enraged and call them "the enemies of progress"

Let it be clearly understood that one should, as the first requisite, try to find out the criterion according to which a thing is included in or excluded from the Shariah, so that the question may be decided easily. Such a criterion is a single one namely, the promise of reward or the threat of punishment in the other world. Having discovered the final criterion, you now read the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith for yourselves, and you will find any number of premises for reward and threats of punishment with regard to the matters pertaining to mutual transactions and politics. Thus, the criterion having been established, could one still doubt that these things form a part of the Shariah? In fact, we have already dealt with the subject under Intimation No. 3, while discussing the fourth and the fifth errors.

If any doubt should still remain, it would most probably apply

not to the injunctions which have been specifically laid down in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, but to those which have been established on the basis of an inference (*Qiyas*) by the masters of Islamic jurisprudence who enjoyed the authority to do so (*Mujtahidun*). We have already shown that they too are a part of the Shariah, under Intimation No. 7 while discussing the first error, and have also shown, under the same Intimation while discussing the fourth error, that the opinion of a man who is not a *Mujtahid* cannot be trustworthy, and that no one does have the position of a *Mujtahid* nowadays. This discussion is quite sufficient to do away with all the doubts that arise with regard to the plurality of wives, divorce, interest, new modes of commerce like insurance etc., new forms of employment, inheritance, war on quarrelsome infidels, or similar problems.

Some people are doubtful about mutual transactions and politics being essential parts of the Shariah or about such injunctions having been ordained for all ages to come, on the ground that one find certain injunctions of this order to be harmful for social life in the present circumstances. So, these people suppose that either such injunctions have not been Divinely ordained or had been ordained only for the early period of Islam. We have already provided the solution to this problem under Intimation No. 3, while discussing the fifth error. Thus, there is no need for us to misinterpret the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and to distort and denature injunctions to certain fanciful *raisons d'etre*, as has become the custom of those who pretend to be the well-wishers of Islam. If an opponent of Islam raises an objection to some Islamic injunction, these people consider it discourteous to demand an argument which could establish the ground on which the objection is based. They rather accept the

objection outright, and proceed to exclude from the Shariah the injunction which is being objected to, and thrust a distorted injunction of their own invention in its place, so that the following verse of the Holy Qur'an can very aptly be applied to them:-

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (آل عمران ـ٧٨ س ٣)

"And there is a group of men among them who twist tongues in reciting the Book, so that you may suppose it is part of the Book, yet it is not part of the Book; and they say, 'It is from God', yet it is not from God, and they speak falsehood against God, and that wittingly." (3:78)

The real root of all error is the love of worldly life and the flattery of worldly people. To tell the truth, our modernists only seek to flatter a certain set of worldly people (namely, the westernized rulers of society), by distorting Islamic principles in the light of their postulates, and if those people were to accept these principles, their admirers would at once renounce their opinion, and would deny the very same postulates. In short, or modernists are oriented only towards the search for the approval of worldly people---they would keep turning themselves according to the will of the worldly people, as the man offering his prayers in a ship keeps changing his direction every time the ship turns.

Intimation (14)

Regarding Social Customs (Mu' sharat)

As in the matter of mutual transactions and politics, people commit the same error here--that is to say, they do not consider social customs etc. to have any connection with religion, but make such things dependent on personal convenience and liking, or on prevalent cultural standards or on the exigencies of the day. In order to see through this error, it would be sufficient to apply the criterion which we have mentioned under Intimation No. 13.

There is, however, no doubt that in those matters with regard to which the Shariah has laid down neither a general nor a specific rule one is quite free to act as one likes. But in all those cases for which the Shariah has laid down a general or a specific regulation there is now freedom of choice for any one.

We may mention a few examples of such specific regulations. It is prohibited to a male to wear a dress made purely of silk; it is not permissible for a male to let his trousers go beneath the ankles or the shave of his bread; it is prohibited to make or keep the picture of a living being, to keep a dog without there being any need for it is a sin, it is not permissible to eat the meat of an animal which has not been slaughtered in the prescribed way according to the Shariah; it is not permissible to take alcohol or spirits either as a drink or as medicine, nor to use it externally or internally.

Now, one or two examples of general regulations. It is not permissible for a Muslim to simulate the infidels either in dress or

in modes of food and drink etc. It is forbidden to collect subscriptions through some clever trick or when not given willingly. It is necessary to avoid that particular kind of carriage or dress which is intended to show off one's power or wealth or position, etc.

In all such matters no one is free to choose or act as one likes. Nowadays, individual freedom has become a special cult, and it is usually employed in such matters. If any one tries to correct the followers of this cult, they invent all sorts of tricks to defend themselves. Sometimes they demand a "proof" from the Holy Qur'an to justify these injunctions; sometimes they raise doubts with regard to the Traditions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ; sometime they ascribe fanciful *raisons d'etre* to these regulations, and on this basis proceed to modify or distort them; sometimes they ask for a rational justification, and sometimes provide gratuitous explanations for such practices; and sometimes they are insolent enough to make fun of these injunctions.

We have already refuted all such objections in the foregoing Intimations. The fact of the matter is that the individual opinion of any person has no value as against the legal regulations of the Shariah, nor is it permissible to investigate into their aims and objects. If a *raison d'etre* or subtlety is now and then given out in order to make things simpler to understand, it is not a complete explanation, but only a concession. But the mind and taste of our contemporaries has become so distorted that such statements are supposed to be very valuable. So, by way of a concession, we too may make a little remark on the subject of imitating the infidels in dress etc. If some one appears before others dressed in the clothes of his wife, would it not look odd on the very same basis of imitation? Do the so-called "civilised" rulers, who make every-

thing dependent upon reason, not compel those who appear in a court of law to obey certain legal regulations with regard to dress? If some one were to transgress them, would it not be considered as contempt of court? This being so, can the Shariah not have the right to interfere with personal lives even to this extent?

Intimation (15)

Regarding Moral Attitudes and Affectations of the Human Mind

As in the case of mutual transaction, politics or social customs, the same error is committed in this matter too that is to say, it is not supposed to come within the purview of religion. And the argument which shows the falsity of this opinion is again the same as has been advanced in the case of mutual transactions etc. that is, the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith give out the promise of reward and the threat of punishment with regard to specified moral attitudes.

A special error that is usually committed in this matter is that certain virtues have been falsely mixed up with certain *vices*, and *vice* versa, and a proper demarcation has not been made between the two categories. Consequently certain moral attitudes which are reprehensible in their essential nature, have been given fine names, and thus considered to be commendable, while others have been dealt with in the opposite manner. Let us cite a few instances of the first kind. What is nowadays regarded as "progress" is in its essential nature the greed for money and social position; what is called "honour" is in fact pride; the quality known as "love for one's nation" is basically the spirit of tribalism which blinds one to the distinction between right and wrong; what is called "statesmanship" is in fact deceit and cunning; what is known as "keeping up with the march of time" is in reality mere hypocrisy; so on and so forth.

Now, as for the instances of the second kind, that is of those moral attitudes which are commendable but are nowadays (vices) being included among the reprehensible ones contentment which is supposed to be the lack of initiative; acceptance of and resignation to the Will of God, which is condemned as idleness; zealous regard for religion and firmness of faith, which is called dogmatism and fanaticism; indifference to one's physical appearance, which is described as debasing oneself; courtesy, which is supposed to be meanness and pettiness of mind; fear of God and piety, which is considered to be mere whimsicality; keeping oneself away from unnecessarily mixing with people, which is called misanthropy; so on and so forth.

In certain cases, they have not given new names to vices, but do practice them, taking them to be virtues, to give a few instances; false imputation of motives to others; injustice to and negligence of the rights of the poor; callous attitude towards the needy, humiliating others; lack of respect for others; slandering others, picking faults in them, and specially maligning the *Ulema* and pious people; exhibitionism, vanity and hypocrisy; squandering money; indifference to the concerns of the other world; etc., etc.

If one wishes to learn more on the subject of moral attitudes, one should consult the books on ethics, particularly the works of Imam Ghazzali which are incomparable in this respect.

Intimation (16)

Regarding Rational Argumentation

Nowadays people talk too often and too much about rational argumentation, but when they actually employ this method, they commit a number of errors. Firstly, they give absolute precedence to a rational argument over an argument based on sound report. We have already laid down the rule with regard to this situation under Principle No. 7. Secondly, they take a conjecture or an induction for a rational argument. Thirdly, they try to explain the subsidiary injunctions of the Shariah on a rational basis. Fourthly considering a precedent to be a final proof, they sometimes rely on it completely while advancing a proposition, and sometimes demand a precedent from their opponent in a discussion, even though he has established his own case on the basis of an argument. Fifthly, they demand a rational argument for things which are rationally possible. We have already shown the falsity of the last two things under Principles No. 5 and 6. Sixthly, if a thing is improbable , they suppose that it is for the very same reason impossible. Seventhly, they consider the habitual and the rational to be one and the same thing. So on and so forth.

CONCLUSION

Having dealt with these doubts and objections, we think that

they are sufficient for the moment. If the Almighty Allah helps us or some one else to continue the work on this subject as we have explained in the introduction, more additions can be made to the present book later on. The present book is, so to say, the first volume, and the future additions will make up the later volumes.

21, Rajab, 1330 A.H.

Thana Bhawan